TRUE STORIES OF THE AMERICAN WEST

THE WEST

BIG ANNE—
THE MADAM WHO
"RAN" OKLAHOMA CITY

HARRY MORSE—
THE LAWMAN
BLACK BART
COULDN'T HANDLE

QUEEN OF THE
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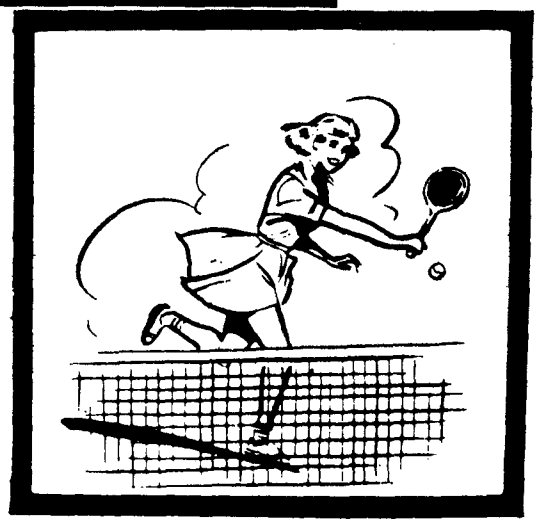

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TRUE STORIES OF THE GREAT AMERICAN WEST

THE WEST

JUNE 1973 VOLUME 16, NUMBER 11

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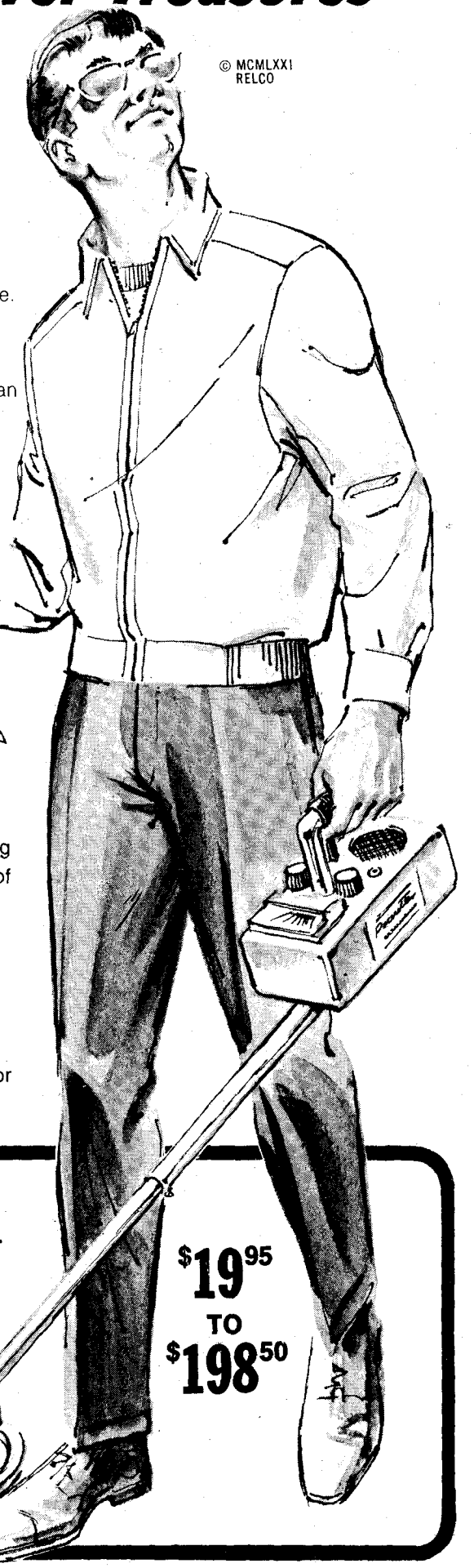

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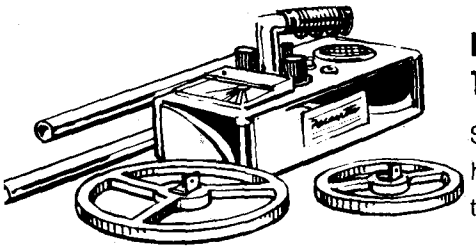

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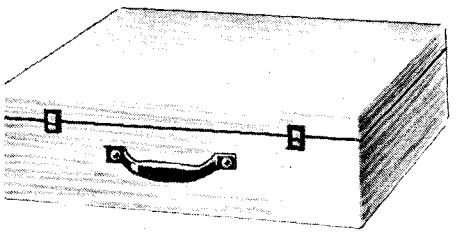

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THE MAIL POUCH

MORE ON DICK WARE

Recently I wrote to your magazine requesting information or a picture of my great, great uncle Dick Ware, the Texas Ranger who I claimed shot and killed the famous outlaw Sam Bass. You replied and said you could find no information or photos of any kind on him.

Since that time I have written to many people inquiring about him and it almost seemed as though no one could help me find out more about him or prove that he was the Texas Ranger who killed Sam Bass. I continued investigating the matter and am happy to say I have found just about all the available information on the man including a picture of him and of his gravesite in Colorado City, Texas. I'm sure your readers will find these photos interesting.

The gentleman who was able to help me most with my research was Mr. Robert Stephens of Dallas, Texas, who supplied me with the pictures. Mr. Stephens, who, by the way, has a new book out on the life histories of the Texas Rangers, went to Ware's grave personally and took the photographs of the monument the Ware family placed there, and also of the inscribed marker placed over his grave by the state of Texas.

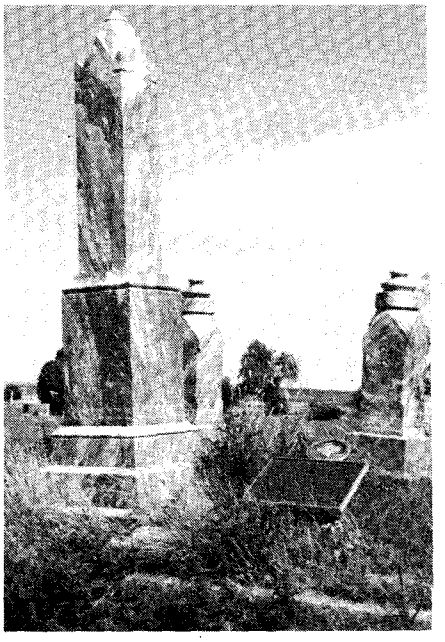
R.C. (DICK) WARE
1851-1902

Born in Georgia, migrated to Texas in the 1870's and joined the Texas Rangers in 1878.

Was noted for his part in gun battle with outlaw Sam Bass at Round Rock, where Bass had planned to rob the bank. It was Ware's bullet that gave Bass the wound from which he died.

Was elected first sheriff of Mitchell County in 1881; retired 1892. Was appointed U.S. Marshal for Western District of Texas, 1893. Served four years.
Recorded-1967

Texas Ranger Dick Ware (right) is given credit by that state for killing outlaw Sam Bass. The state erected a plaque on the monument (below) Ware's family placed on his grave.



The state of Texas investigated the incident of the shooting and found that Ranger George Herold did not kill Sam Bass even though Lieutenant C.L. Nevill stated in his official report that he did. Sam Bass himself was asked before he died "Who was the man who shot you?" He replied, "The man with soap on his face."

It was Ware who ran partially shaved from the barber shop and shot Bass as he was going for his horse, and there are Texas history books which state clearly that Ware was the only Ranger anywhere near a barber shop at the time and certainly the only one getting a shave.

There is also one other item I would like to comment on. It is generally known that Benjamin Ware was Dick Ware's father, but there are no existing records of who his mother was. My grandmother, 76 years old and still living in Texas, replied that Dick Ware's mother was Tennie Young.

If any of your readers still have doubts as to who really shot and killed Sam Bass, I suggest a little trip to Colorado City, Texas to visit Dick Ware's grave and read the words written over it and placed there by the state of Texas. Nothing—not even time—will change that.

MICHAEL HAMM
Santa Rosa, Calif.

(Continued on page 44)

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THE OLD TIMERS CORNER

By Bill Salisbury

ELKHEAD

IT WAS SPRING and the mines were closed down when John A. met me on the street in Hayden, Colorado. He said he needed a hand on the ranch which was at Elk Head, 18 miles northwest of Hayden.

Well, I thought it over and figured if I managed right I could feed my wife and three children, Charles, 4, Bruce, 3, and Robert, 1½, and save a little for a rainy day. So I took the job and John came to town a couple of days later and we loaded all our worldly goods and off we went to the ranch.

I got acquainted with my duties at the ranch and my wife began preparing a garden and getting things ready to take care of our little family.

This was quite a large ranch. They had 500 head of cattle and 85 head of horses and I don't know or remember how many acres of wheat and oats were raised, but it was many. Of course it was dry land, depending on natural moisture, being the grain fields were on the mesas. The meadow, which was Timothy and red top clover, was on lower ground where we could irrigate it. One day John came to me with good news.

"Now Bill, this meadow has been cutting 800 tons of hay, and if you can get it to cut a thousand tons I'll buy you and a helper each a good suit of clothes."

This promise sure sounded good to me, cause if all it took was hard work, I was ready.

Yes, we did it. That fall we cut and stacked and measured out 1,100 tons. But I haven't got the suit yet.

Well, that is neither here or there, but from the start I told John I would like to check out the range cows for a good milk cow. He said "Okay, help yourself."

I chose a good looking cow from the herd and broke her to milk. Being they were range cattle, I found I had taken on quite a contest. But milk, butter and cottage cheese are quite essential to feeding a family.

Later on, John said, "Say, you're pretty good at milking cows. How about checking out some more, and if we get enough we can separate the milk and we'll sell the cream and have a cream check coming in which I will split with you 50-50. I can deliver the cream as I have to go to town quite often anyway."

Eventually I was milking 12-14 cows morning and evening and I do mean that cream check did help. In fact, it bought all the basic needs from the grocers, leaving my $30 a month untouched, which made me feel pretty good. However, we didn't buy too many groceries as we'd taken wheat from the bin and brought it up to a neighbor who had a hammer mill and had it cracked for cereal.

Then there was the garden for vegetables. There were lots of sage chickens and cottontail rabbits in the area which we harvested quite heavily.

However, it was quite hard on my wife as she seldom got a chance to go to town. I remember making one trip to town by sled in the winter as the snow was too deep for a wagon.

We went to town one day and stayed overnight. The next day when we started home we noticed the road toward Elk Head had thawed and the snow all melted leaving nothing but mud and a steep hill about two miles long for the first leg of our trip.

When we came to the hill which, by the way, was known and still is as the "Cog Road" on account of the steepness of it, my wife and I and all the kids had taken off our shoes and socks and walked behind the sled to try to help the horses pull it through the mud.

If I remember right, that first two miles took us nearly three hours. When we hit the top of the Mesa, where the sun did not get at it so heavy, we had snow the rest of the way. So even though we had a pretty tired team of horses—we made it in pretty good season.

Needless to say, she didn't care about going too often. Well, things looked pretty good till nearly Christmas when my wife went to John and said, "I would like for you to get me a money order for $40 to get my children some things for Christmas."

Boy, did he sputter and spit.

She said, "John, you know my husband has it coming."

So he came through okay, but I began to become suspicious.

I told my wife we would stick it out till spring as we weren't quitters, and besides, we did not have anything else in view nor any place to go.

However, during the year we were there we had some very unusual experiences which, as I look back, seem almost unbelievable.

One of these incidents I remember quite well concerned a fellow working there. He called himself Doc Smith, and in that country we never questioned a man about his name. Anyway, he lived in the school house—which was not being used at the time—and was down the meadow from the main house and the house where my wife and I lived. He was working temporarily during haying along with several other itinerant workers. Being he had a wife was the reason he stayed in the school house.

We were coming in from the field one evening, each riding one of the work horses.

I said, "Hey Doc, looks like you got company. I see a car by your house."

He jumped off his horse and handed me his team's lead rope and said, "Here, take my team."

He started to run across the meadow towards the brush across the creek when a fellow stepped out of the school house and shot at him with a pistol.

Needless to say I was quite surprised and concerned, but Doc was not hit as it looked like he sure knew how to dodge and dart. And he made the brush unhit.

A little later he appeared at our house and asked if I would loan him a gun to defend himself.

I said "Yes," but it was a little late as they had already gone in his car.

He studied a minute then said, "I wonder how he found us. You see, I had run off with his wife."

Well, I figured he was lucky to get

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out of that alive!

The snows came soon and it could really snow in that high country so naturally my work was cut out for me as the stock had to be fed and tended every day. One day a neighbor came riding in leading a horse. He said, "I need help. My wife is going to have her first baby and I'm afraid to start to town with her as it may happen on the road."

That left no alternative. My wife had to leave the children with me and go with him to deliver his wife to town and the M.D.

She got back in two days and reported everything was okay as she made town with no incident, it being 18 miles to town through loose snow. That was probably quite a trip for all of them. I know it was two hard days for me with three little kids and all the other duties.

Things went well for awhile, though it snowed nearly every day. I think we only saw the sun about six times in the five months of that winter. Boy what a gloomy time.

Along towards spring one of our neighbors, who happened to handle sheep, rode in all excited and said his mules had got into the poison grain he had gotten to poison ground squirrels.

I didn't know what else to do but jumped on a horse and rode over to his place. Looking around, I asked him if he had any lard, which is something most everybody had lots of. He brought out a couple of large crocks of lard.

We made some wood paddles and went to work forcing those two mules to eat that lard and believe it or not they cooperated pretty well. The mules lived, but to this day I'm not so sure they ate any of those poisoned oats and if they did—how much? Anyway, their master was as scared as if they had eaten a bushel.

Later on, as the weather began to break and the snow to melt, here comes the same neighbor in trouble again. I asked him what was wrong.

"This time it's my sheep," he said.

"Poison?" I asked.

He said, "No. They are drowning and I am powerless to do anything about it."

Again I jumped on a horse and rode over to his place. The first thing I noticed was that the sheep were all in the bottoms along the creek and I could see where someone had been cutting cottonwood trees and making posts out of the boles of said trees. The sheep had been eating the small stems.

I told him, "Quit cutting the trees because the sheep are apparently hungry and they'll hang around to eat that brush as they are natural browsers.

Then he told me the story.

He had gone to the bank which had a mortgage on the sheep and asked for a loan to get some hay. Then this other neighbor, who was a bachelor who lived in the area and had some land spoke up and said to the banker, "No use trying to get hay to those sheep as the cottonwoods are starting to bud. I'll cut said cottonwoods and they will fare very well on the buds. Now this will only cost you a dollar a day and it will carry them over till natural food starts breaking through."

So that deal was made. The banker of course, not knowing much about sheep, did not know that the trees were in the bottoms which was almost a lake that time of year nor how helpless a sheep was when he got his heavy coat of wool full of water.

I looked things over and said to the sheep man and his neighbor, "Fellows, this won't get it. If you will look up on the hillsides the sage brush is showing through and I believe if we can get them out of this water and up on the hillside they'll be all right."

Needless to say, the post cutter said, "No! No, the bank hired me to cut brush for them and that is the way it's going to be."

I climbed aboard my horse and rode off as I didn't think anything would come of more argument but a fight and maybe a killing, and I didn't want any part in either one.

I didn't sleep any that night as compassion for the sheep man and his sheep was heavy on my conscience.

About daylight I went out to bring in some wood for the stove as it had been an exceptionally cold night. I noticed the snow was crusted and you could easily walk on it. This gave me an idea. I saddled up my horse, called my dogs, and headed for that pitiful band of sheep.

When I arrived there was not another soul near the area. So I put myself, my horse, and my dogs to work boosting those sheep out of that hole over the top of the crusted snow to the sagebrush hillside. He didn't lose any more sheep and the bachelor didn't cut any more posts.

The axeman didn't like me very well after that.

Things went along from there till spring without much incident till one morning I went into the main house and said to John, "I've been here a year now and I would like to settle up."

He looked at me sort of shocked and said, "I can't settle up with you as I am bankrupt and the bank has taken everything."

I caught a ride to town with a neighbor and went to the bank and they verified what John said. Just being an ignorant working man, I didn't try to go to court or anything to get my money. I just went home and my wife and I packed up our wordly goods and started looking around for someone who would deliver our stuff to town—on credit, no less.

We finally made a deal with a crippled old man who could not work much but could do light work and handle a team pretty good. We loaded all our stuff on a hay rack and got another neighbor to take us to Hayden 18 miles away.

We rented a house in town again on credit, figuring our goods would reach there later that day. When they didn't, we curled up in the corner and slept in our clothes.

The poor little kids couldn't understand why they didn't get any supper and didn't even get to go to bed.

Well, next morning I managed to get the store to let me have some bread and spread for sandwiches. That, at least, was one temporary answer to the kids. Then I started inquiring around about the old man and someone told me he was in the hospital because he had a run away.

I hurried up to the hospital. Sure enough, there he was with a broken leg. I said to him, "I'll have to go get my furniture and the children's clothes as I need them right away. Where did you dump it?"

He turned his back not wanting to look at me, and with his head buried under a pillow, he said, "In the river, it all went in the river."

I borrowed a team and wagon to go and see what I could salvage.

Since it was spring and the river was up, when he drove alongside the bank apparently caved in dumping the wagon in the torrent. I salvaged nothing.

To my wife and children and I, I think that was one of the hardest and most eventful years of our lives—and also one of the most wasted! ●

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THE SPECKLED CATTLE

by Fred Grove

Buffalo hunters skinning animal, after which they often discarded edible parts and kept only the skin.

Hell-raisin' Rath City died suddenly, in May 1879, like a bull shot in the lights... Charlie Rath closed his store, and George Akin loaded up what whiskey was left and pulled for far parts. The hide hunters, having killed off the buffalo, had already left...

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...THE FESTIVE COWBOY

BY THE SPRING of 1874 the professionals were swarming into the Texas Panhandle, behind them the bone-littered plains of Kansas, eastern Colorado and Nebraska. In five years the vast southern buffalo herd would be gunned down to a scattering of doomed animals. Yet, "...I figure we're just killin' off the natural increase," one commercial buffalo hunter said.

Furious Comanches, Cheyennes and Arapahoes closed that route to the lush ranges for about a year, attacking the hunters' camp at Adobe Walls on the South Canadian River in the summer of '74, thereby forcing the northern hide crews to avoid the Panhandle and go around by Indian Territory.

How many buffalo were left in Texas? Plenty. Millions. Before the white man came, it is believed some 75 million American buffalo or bison roamed North America.

Fort Griffin, on the Clear Fork of the Brazos, soon became the outfitting hub for the slaughter, with an estimated 1,500 hunters operating out of there at the height of the killing in the winter of 1876-77. And friendly Frank E. Conrad had the biggest store of all. Hunters bought lead by the bar, melted it and spooned it into bullet molds, or they purchased paper-patched bullets. Black gunpowder came in 25-pound kegs.

Most hunters preferred to load their own brass shells because it was cheaper, and you could step up the powder charge as much as you liked. A good Sharps rifle cost from $100 to $150. Each hunter carried in his ammunition box a reloading outfit, bullet molds, primer extractor, swedge, tamper, patch paper and lubricator.

The town fanned out on the broad flat below the fort, perched on the rocky hill overlooking the river valley. Acres of hides lay stacked like hay. Military personnel called the boisterous settlement the "Bottom" or the "Flat." It employed every known lure to part the buffalo crews from their sweaty earnings. Women walked the streets, eager to trade their charms for cash. These "soiled doves," as the frontiersmen called them, were actually licensed, inasmuch as each paid an annual fine of $100 for "keeping a disorderly house."

Main Street sprawled like a dusty snake from the foot of the hill to the timbered river. Whiskered hunters, skinners, bullwhackers, cowboys, soldiers and Tonkawa Indians, who sometimes scouted for the soldiers, overflowed the town. Night and day, no matter, a man just off the buffalo ranges could hear the enticing tinkle and strumming of music all along the street. Killings were frequent.

One of the best known establishments was Mollie McCabe's Palace of Beautiful Sin. Another was the Bee Hive, a combination saloon, gambling house, and dance hall. On a sign swinging in front a traveling artist had painted a swarming hive festooned with honeysuckle. Under the hive was this verse:

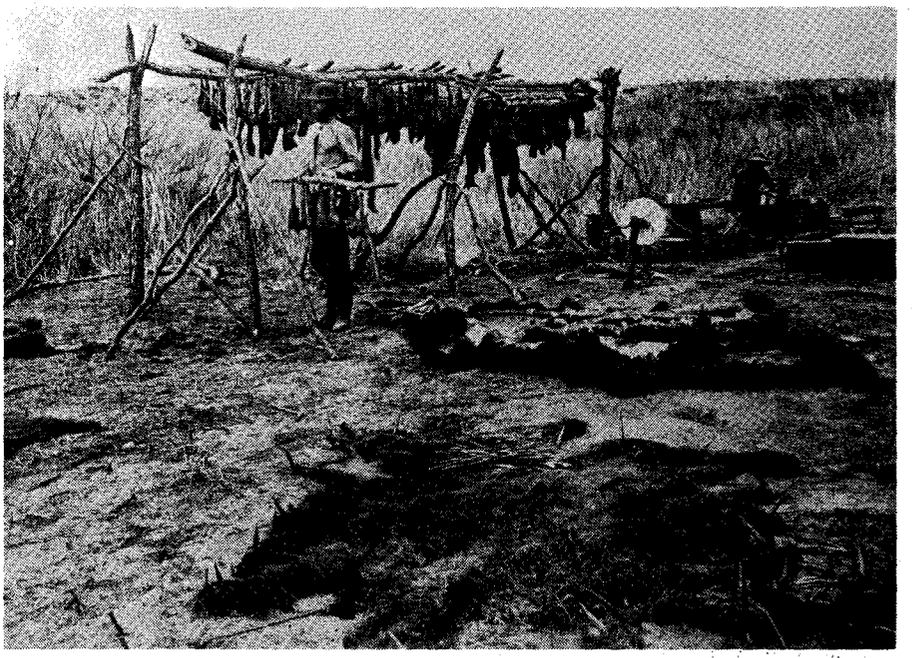
In this hive we are all alive,
Good whiskey makes us funny
If you are dry step in and try
The flavor of our honey

Historian Carl Coke Rister described the "Flat" as one of the West's "four wildest towns." It brought death to young Johnny Golden, a clean-looking Illinois boy. Pretty Lottie Deno, a dance hall girl, fell in love with Johnny, and a jealous saloonkeeper had Johnny arrested on a fake complaint of horse stealing. After his body was found, the arresting officers said a "mob" had taken their prisoner and killed him. Later it was learned the so-called lawmen had murdered Johnny for $250. Not until vigilantes took over did any real order prevail.

Meanwhile, another buffalo hunters' town, but on a far smaller scale, was in the making. At Dodge City, Charles Rath and Robert M. Wright, the post sutler at Fort Dodge, formed a partnership with the firm of Lee & Reynolds, post sutlers at Fort Supply in Indian Territory. In December of 1876 they began freighting merchandise to the village on Sweetwater Creek at Fort Elliott in the Texas Panhandle.

Rath took charge from there. With a compass hanging from his saddle horn, he led a caravan almost straight south, over a prairie sea of massive swells. Men using picks, shovels and axes fixed crossings for the laden wagons, some hauling lumber

Photos: University of Okla. Library.



A hunting camp in Texas. In foreground are pegged hides. Buffalo tongues are drying and smoking on pole rack over smoldering fire. The edges are curling on the hide with the flesh side up.

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Forty thousand hides piled in yards of Rath & Wright, Dodge City, 1877.

for the new town. About sixty hide outfits followed. John R. Cook, a hunter who later wrote an interesting book on his adventures titled *The Border and the Buffalo,* said the idea was to get "on the flank of the southern herd."

Rath chose a site for his town about one mile south of the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River in Stonewall County, 12 miles northwest of the future location of Hamlin. The hide men called it Rath City and Reynolds City. The northern hunters provided the nucleus around whom Rath built his trade. Shortly, another hunter joined them—Pat Garret, who was to become the sheriff of Lincoln County, New Mexico, the man who killed Billy the Kid.

Some half a dozen adobe and pole-and-hide and cedar-picket buildings, including a shelter to store gunpowder, rose on the short-grass prairie. Rath's store occupied the largest structure. In the rear obliging Charlie Sing had his laundry. Other businesses of note included George Akin's saloon and dance hall, Smokey Thompson's wagon yard, and a barber shop and blacksmith shop. As a precaution against Indian horse thieves, the townsmen built a sod corral with a corner room for guards. Not long after, forty dance hall girls came down from Dodge City and thereafter the town whooped and stomped as long as the buffalo lasted. In 1877 an estimated million dollars' worth of hides passed through Rath City.

At first, freighters hauled hides from Fort Griffin and Rath City to the railroad towns of Dallas and Denison, but in July, 1876, the Texas & Pacific Railroad reached Fort Worth and made it the nearest shipping point. As many as 200,000 hides sold there at a two-day sale. Prices ranged from 75 cents for kip hides (yearlings and two-year-olds) to $2 and $3 for cows and bulls. In earlier times professional hunters chose to take robes in the fall and winter, when the skins were prime or "in the blue;" now, with the slaughter at a frenzy, quality seemed to matter not at all.

What launched the country on its feverish buffalo-killing rampage was the discovery in Germany of a tanning process for turning the hides into usable leather. Although buffalo skin is too spongy for sole leather, the development of other uses opened up a wide market—buffalo robes for the open vehicles of the day, buffalo coats, buff leather for belts, saddle trimmings, jackets, and luggage. An English firm placed an order in 1870 for 500 hides through W.C. Lobenstein, the well-known hide and fur dealer of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. A Pennsylvania tanner ordered 2,000 hides at $3.50 each. And the boom was on.

But the massive slaughter did not continue without protests. Legislatures in Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Kansas and Colorado had passed laws protecting the buffalo—laws the states couldn't enforce and which the go-to-hell hide crews ignored with the Army's approval.

When the issue reached the Texas legislature, General Phil Sheridan, commanding the military department of the Southwest, appeared before a joint session of the senate and house. Instead of arresting the hunters, he suggested awarding them bronze medals with a dead buffalo on one side and a discouraged Indian on the other.

"These men have done more in the last two years," he said, "and will do more in the next, to settle the vexed Indian question than the entire regular Army has done in thirty years. They are destroying the Indians' commissary... For the sake of lasting peace, let them kill, skin, and sell until the buffaloes are exterminated."

Then he added, rhetorically, "Your prairies can then be covered with speckled cattle and the festive cowboy, who follows the hunter as a second forerunner of an advanced civilization."

The Texas lawmakers heeded the general's advice, and even had they passed a protective measure the state was obviously in no position to enforce it.

However, one Texan took action which helped save the buffalo from extinction. He was Charles Goodnight, cowman, plainsman and naturalist, who roped buffalo calves, placed them with Texas cows, and thus started the famous Goodnight buffalo herd.

These professional hunters were a lusty lot, hardened to weather and danger. You had to be to take the gut-busting work, the dust storms, the blizzards, the bad water, and to come out alive when war parties threatened a lonely camp.

The panic of 1873 sent thousands of jobless men to the plains. Construction on the Santa Fe railroad halted at Granada, Colorado, July, 1873, and many of the laid-off workmen turned to the buffalo ranges. Clerks, farmers, restless veterans of the Civil War, a sprinkling of mountain men—the bloody bonanza drew all kinds.

Frank H. Mayer, who lived to be 104, was one of the real professionals. Born in Louisiana, he came to buffalo country when 22, and always worked with an outfit never larger than five men. Some outfits paid the skinners 25 cents a hide, with the hunter—or runner—as the pros called themselves, taking half the profits. Not Mayer. After deducting expenses, he saw that each man shared equally in what was left. So he never had trouble keeping a crew together.

A professional killed no more buffalo

The area is quiet, with only remains of killed beast where hunters worked.

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than his skinners could handle that day. An animal left until next morning was tougher to skin and likely wolves or coyotes would damage the robe. The usual order was to ride out early, spot a bunch, crawl within 300 yards or less, set up rest sticks in which to level your rifle and start knocking down the bunch, first killing the leader, usually a cow. You kept gunning down the outside animals, watchful to pelt those beginning to move off.

Mayer used a telescope sight. His favorite holds were neck and heart shots, but most hunters aimed for the "lights" or lungs. A buffalo thus shot immediately sank to his haunches, rocked sideways as his air passages filled with blood and ran out his nostrils; then he rolled over and died.

His shooting done for the day, the runner rode back to his skinners or waved them in from a rise. They drove out in a wagon or two. While they sweated, the lordly runner rested and smoked and kept an eye peeled for Indians.

A professional skinner took pride in seeing that the hides he peeled were free of knife gashes. He had butcher knives handy by the case and he used straight ones for ripping down the furry bellies and slitting the legs, and curved ones for the actual skinning. He carried a butcher's sharpening steel at his belt. A skinner's knife wasn't considered sharp unless "he could shave the hair right off his arm."

A minority of skinners hitched a team to the hide near the neck and jerked off the hide, a practice which often tore it in two. Better to hand-skin the kills; besides, carefully skinned robes drew higher prices.

Back in camp the crew threw the hides on the ground, flesh side up, cut little holes around the outer edges and drove in wooden pegs—three at the neck end of the hide, then pulling on the hide and stretching it and driving two pegs at the tail end, then on around it—stretching the robe into uniform shape.

In a few days the hides dried and were packed flat or sometimes rolled lengthwise in lots of ten. A dry bull hide weighed 50 or more pounds, a cow hide 20 pounds.

J. Wright Mooar, another highly successful hunter, cured hides for a longer period. "We'd pull out the pins and turn the hide over and let the sun dry it off, the hair side, and then we piled them up in piles of a hundred; and when we were ready to cure them, we set a man to work in the morning pulling these hides down off the pile and scattering them out all over the prairie until noon, and in the afternoon he'd commence where he started before and turn them over and pile them up again."

When the hides were cured, they were called "flinted," a term used by all the hide dealers, some of whom sent long caravans of freight wagons to the ranges to haul in the kills—dead buffalos.

The efficient outfits poisoned hides to kill bugs. Mooar mixed a South American poison in vats and sprinkled it on both sides. Cook estimated that for every hide taken to market, one and a half were ruined on the range from various causes. When greenhorn hunters failed to use poison in the summer months, the hide bugs made the robes unmarketable.

Thousands of wounded buffalo wandered off into ravines or brush thickets and died; when found, the hides on the bloated carcasses were spoiled. Others perished from thirst because hide outfits, camped at favorite watering places, bombarded the shaggies when they came to drink. Too, thousands were trampled to death in the mud and quicksand when, crazed, they rushed pell-mell to water.

Oldtimers said the stench from the rotting carcasses was overpowering, like a stain in the air for miles and miles. Billions of screw flies hatched and swarmed. Only by smoking them away with smudges of buffalo chips could a man eat his meal in camp. Wolves and coyotes scavenged among the putrid hulks.

There were some economy-minded hunters who cured meat and sold it in the settlements at prices ranging from four to eight cents a pound. Smoked buffalo tongues, always a delicacy, brought from 20 to 50 cents each, and were shipped back east for serving in leading restaurants. A few outfits took only the tongues.

It was simple enough to cure buffalo meat. If poles were available, you drove four stakes into the ground and rigged up a green hide as a vat, and tied its corners to the stakes so the hide would sag. You boned and salted the big hams, then poured a brine over them. Four days later you added sugar and saltpeter to the brine. Within two weeks the meat was ready for hanging in the smokehouse, a long hide-and-pole structure with fire pits dug in the center.

"You could cut that meat in slices and eat it raw," one old hunter recalled wistfully. "You didn't have to cook it. We always fried our meat for breakfast. Had a barrel of marrow bones rendered out. Used that for frying and for shortening in bread. Better than tallow."

Many a grizzled hunter swore that the coarse, dark buffalo meat, especially that taken in the fall when the animals were fat, was better than beef, and that "...a man could live on buffler and nothin' else and get along just fine."

Except for the Adobe Walls fight, the Indians made no concerted campaign to drive out the hunters; other recorded instances were confined to attacks on smaller camps. The Indian knew the buffalo, his life's sustenance, was dwindling fast, although like the hunter he found it hard to believe when the smoke cleared that the buffalo was truly gone. Yet why didn't the Indian prevent the slaughter?

Bones of countless thousands of buffalo lay scattered in disjointed wolf-gnawed fragments all over the great plains of the West.

The answer was that he couldn't, for two reasons. He was outgunned, outranged by the large-caliber rifles, foremost the Sharps, in the hands of the army of hunters. Another was the Indian himself, his makeup, his lack of organization and communication within the tribes. He fought as an individual, not as a man serving in a military unit. If his medicine seemed weak the day of the fight, if the signs weren't right, he wasn't expected to fight.

His concept of war and glory didn't equip him for a systematic, drawn-out campaign against the many hunters' camps. He was more of a hit-and-run raider. His code said it was braver to strike an enemy in close than to shoot him from a distance.

(Continued on page 46)

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BROTHER VAN- GOD'S

Brother Van was a missionary that God had picked for the job. He was built like a wrestler and could take care of himself like a heavyweight boxer... and he came to Montana when the West was at its wildest...

by Art Fee

WHEN GOD SENT THE Reverend William Wesley Van Orsdel to tame the Wild West, he didn't come with a blazing gun in each hand and a silver star on his vest, like most of the lawmen of the Old West, but with a Bible in one hand and a hymn book in the other.

With these two weapons he did more to tame and uplift the standards of civilization than any man who ever came to Montana territory. At seven o'clock on the morning of June 30th, 1872, he stepped off the well-known river steamer, *Far West,* into the frontier town of Fort Benton. Here he got his first glimpse of the Wild West and he was shocked at what he saw. It was Sunday morning but the town was wide open. The muddy, rutted streets were filled with wagons and with people. Ox-carts squealed under their burden of buffalo hides. Bull whackers cracked their whips and freighters yelled at their mules in a language foreign to the missionary's ear.

Each saloon was doing a land office business. Bars were lined with patrons, roulette wheels were spinning, dice rolling and money was quickly changing hands at the card tables.

The Rev. Van Orsdel was a missionary the Almighty had picked for the job. He was built like a wrestler and could take care of himself like a heavy-weight boxer. He always wore a large black Stetson hat, a long black clerical coat, white shirt and vest, and well polished black boots. With his worn carpet bag in one hand—filled with hymn books—and his Bible in the other, he walked into the largest building in town. It was the Four Deuces saloon, a huge, unpainted two-story structure with a bar in it half a city block long, tended by white coated men wearing 45 Colts. Each card table was circled by gamblers and viewers. Back of the spinning roulette wheels was space on the polished floor for dancing. On the second story was a balcony opening off into rooms where the upstairs girls did a thriving business.

Reverend Van Orsdel walked up to the proprietor, who looked and acted like the lord and master of all he surveyed.

"Sir," he said. "This is Sunday morning. I am a Methodist missionary and I am looking for a place to hold a preaching service."

Whether it was Van Orsdel's sincerity or the man thought this would be a good place to play a practical joke on the missionary—that we will never know. For he answered, "Right here." Then he took a long drag on his cigar, laid it down, put two of his diamond ringed fingers in his mouth and blew a loud whistle. Men stopped their yelling, women their singing and the kid at the music box quit his rag time chording.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the Four Deuces is happy to present for the first time in Fort Benton, or Montana territory, a real genuine preacher! Everybody keep still until he is through. The bar will be closed for an hour. Go ahead, preacher."

You could hear a pin drop when Van Orsdel stepped out on the floor. You could tell right away his listeners wondered what kind of a show this was going to be. Cards were laid down, the wheels stopped spinning, the dancers found chairs. Glasses were set on the bar and men turned around expectantly. The upstairs girls opened their doors and came out and stood on the balcony looking down at the man in black on the dance hall floor.

Before him that day was gathered one of the most hardened congregations a preacher ever faced. Among them were road agents, bullwhackers, gold miners, gamblers, roustabouts, cowboys, trappers, prospectors, hide hunters, and prostitutes. He eyed this congregation and knew this was his God-given opportunity to communicate with these men and women. He breathed a silent prayer and lifted his magnificent voice, and without any accompaniment he sang "In The Sweet By and By."

The crowd instantly knew here was a man with an outstanding set of "pipes" and they listened entranced. The pianist picked up the melody and the preacher sang the hit tune of the day, "Diamond in the Rough," to rousing applause.

Blackfeet Indians loved Father Van,

The crowd was transformed. Hard men and women were transported back to better days and better ways. Some wept, some cried, some whistled, some blew their noses, others stamped their feet and clapped their hands, but all shouted, "More, preacher, more. We want more!"

That was the Reverend Van Orsdel's introduction to the Wild West. That day Montana adopted him as "Brother Van," and that was the name he was always known by.

Like Paul, the great apostle of the Bible, Brother Van came west under appointment of God. In a vision he saw the men of the West and he heard them calling him. There were miners, stage coach drivers, freighters, cowboys, and here and there a copper colored native. He was especially equipped for his task because he had a warm, pleasing personality and excellent health. Long rides, irregular meals, dousings in icy rivers, extreme heat or cold or even weighty responsibility never seemed to bother him. He could sleep well on a hard floor or on a church bench, with his coat wrapped about him, and this he often did. His preaching was the kind the West

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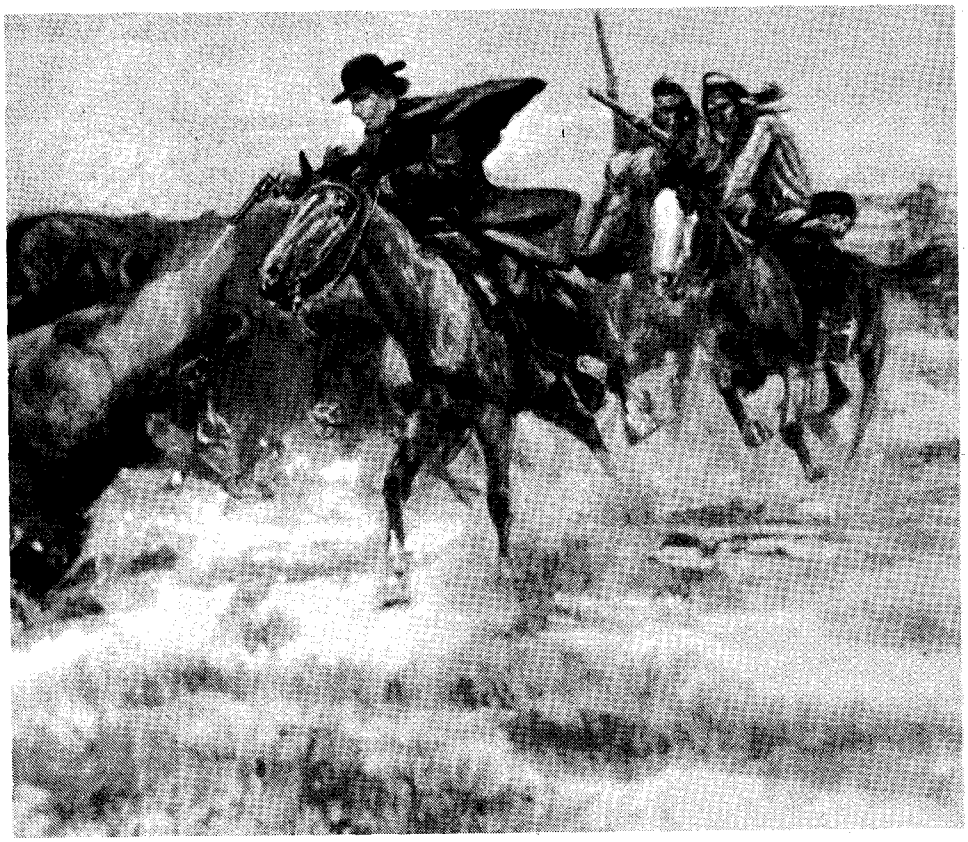
RUGGED MAN

Illus.: Russell Art Gallery.



bestowed on him honor of shooting lead buffalo, as Russell depicted (abv).

Photo: Montana Hist. Society

Rev. Van Orsdel loved people of Mont.

needed. Like Will Rogers, he had a special sense of humor and this was an invaluable asset—it made him a special attraction. It must be remembered there were no radios or phonographs in those days and anyone who could sing was in great demand.

When he visited a saloon the proprietor would often close the bar. The gamblers would lay down their cards to applaud him. It mattered not whether it was an isolated village, a mushrooming mining town, or a lonely ranch house—he was always welcome.

He started his mission to the Blackfeet Indians southeast of what is now Glacier National Park, but the Blackfeet would not accept his theology. Brother Van soon learned the Indians had been lied to, deceived, robbed, plundered, and murdered not only by the traders and trappers but also by the U.S. government. They had lost all respect for the white man. They said, "If the white man's religion is good for us, why is it no good for him?"

Brother Van loved the Indians but he knew if he was to help them he would have to get the gospel to the white man first. He left the evangelizing of the Indians to other missionaries, but not until he had won their confidence. They bestowed on him the honor of shooting the lead buffalo that the noted artist Charlie Russell has so vividly illustrated for us in his famous picture, "Brother Van Shooting Buffalo." (See above).

He came to Montana when the West was at its wildest. Gold was abundant and every possible device was employed by gamblers to get it. Every fourth cabin was a saloon and many of these were filled with gambling tables. A day or a night never passed that did not yield its fruition of fights and often killings. In Virginia City alone, in six months, the Plummer gang shot and killed 120 men. Hurdy gurdy dance houses were all too numerous and men's passions triumphed over their reason. This was the West to which Brother Van came to preach the Gospel. Only one who was divinely called could succeed.

There were times when it was almost impossible to hold a preaching mission in these towns. Often he would just start singing and from outside the building would come a roar of gunfire. Windows would be shattered, the lights shot out and the stove pipes riddled with bullet holes. When the shooting ceased his congregation would pick themselves up off the glass-covered floor and fade into the darkness—never to return. Then there were other, more rewarding times when hard men came to break up the meeting, but stayed to pray. Many times the worst men in town were converted.

First last and always Brother Van was a true minister of the Gospel and everyone knew it. Two years after he arrived he had established a 4000-mile preaching circuit. That included America's toughest frontier towns such as Virginia City, Bannack, Butte, and Salmon City, to mention a few. He had strong convictions about doing wrong and constantly preached against the sins of the times. When visiting a home he questioned everyone about their spiritual welfare.

In those days preachers were few and far apart and rather than wait for one, couples often just shacked up. When Brother Van found a couple who were not legally married, he would marry them and have their children stand as witnesses. If the children were not baptized he would baptize them. Death came swift and often in those days, but Brother Van knew how to deal with the bereaved. His own heart had been crushed by tragedy. The only girl he ever loved died a short while before the date set for their wedding—and he never married.

One of the sad things about the early West was that many men came to spread the gospel, but because of discourage-

(Continued on page 45)

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Across the floor of the desert two whirling spirals of animated dust raced toward one another... and when they met the battle between Winnemucca's warriors on the one side and the volunteers and cavalry on the other entered the terrible phase of blood and death...

PAIUTE POISON

by Budington Swanson

THE TWO YOUNG BANNOCK squaws listened intently inside the inky blackness of the cabin at Williams' Station. The younger of the two women leaned forward, head poised to one side, her ear sampling the strange noises of the night. Above the heavy snoring of the sleeping white men came the eerie whispers of the wind in the pinenut trees outside. Sitting upright, the younger of the two women fought fiercely at the buckskin thong which bound her wrists behind her, then she fell back against the wall of the cabin, breathing unevenly.

"Save your strength," the other squaw muttered impassively. "You will need it tomorrow to fight them off."

The dark eyes of the other flashed towards the men slumbering in their bunks.

"They sleep—*now*!" she spat. Hoarsely she cursed the white men.

The older woman stiffened and listened intently. "A footstep... outside," she whispered.

"The rising wind. No one knows we are here!"

"Chief Winnemucca will follow the trail. He will bring our husbands."

"It will be too late!"

Suddenly the door crashed in and the huge silhouette of an Indian stood in the doorway. The warclub in his hand dropped in a swift, sweeping blow. A skull crunched beneath the impact, and one of the white men would never awaken.

The commotion aroused the other men. They rolled from their bunks with an angry roar.

"*Winnemucca*!"

Jim Williams reached for his rifle, and the cry died still-born in his throat. He fell from the upper bunk, clawing the arrow that pierced his chest. Indian braves poured into the cabin, screaming and killing. Gunshots echoed in the night. Hunting knives gleamed and savage cries is-

Chief Winnemucca; "...When they march on our sacred land, we fight."

Illus. furnished by Author.

Gov. Nye ended Paiute poison.

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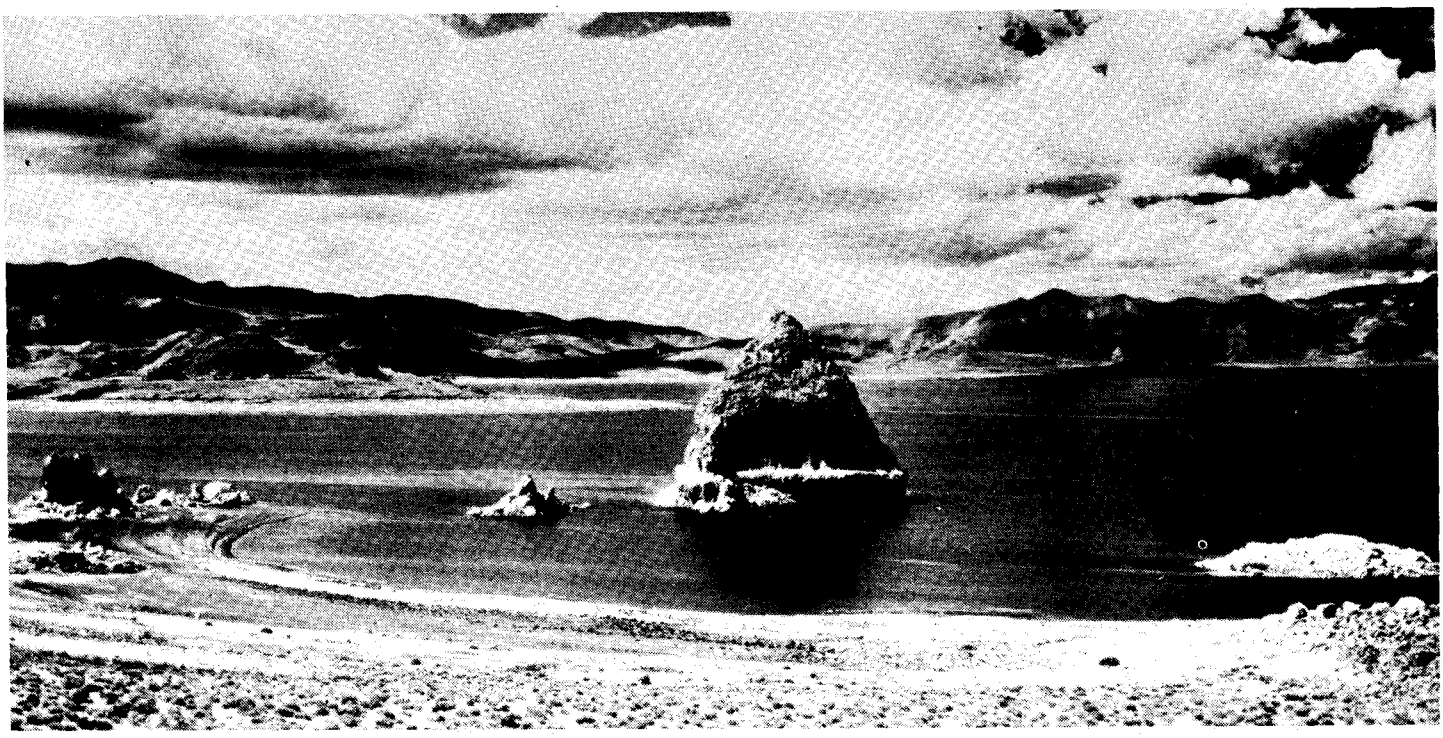
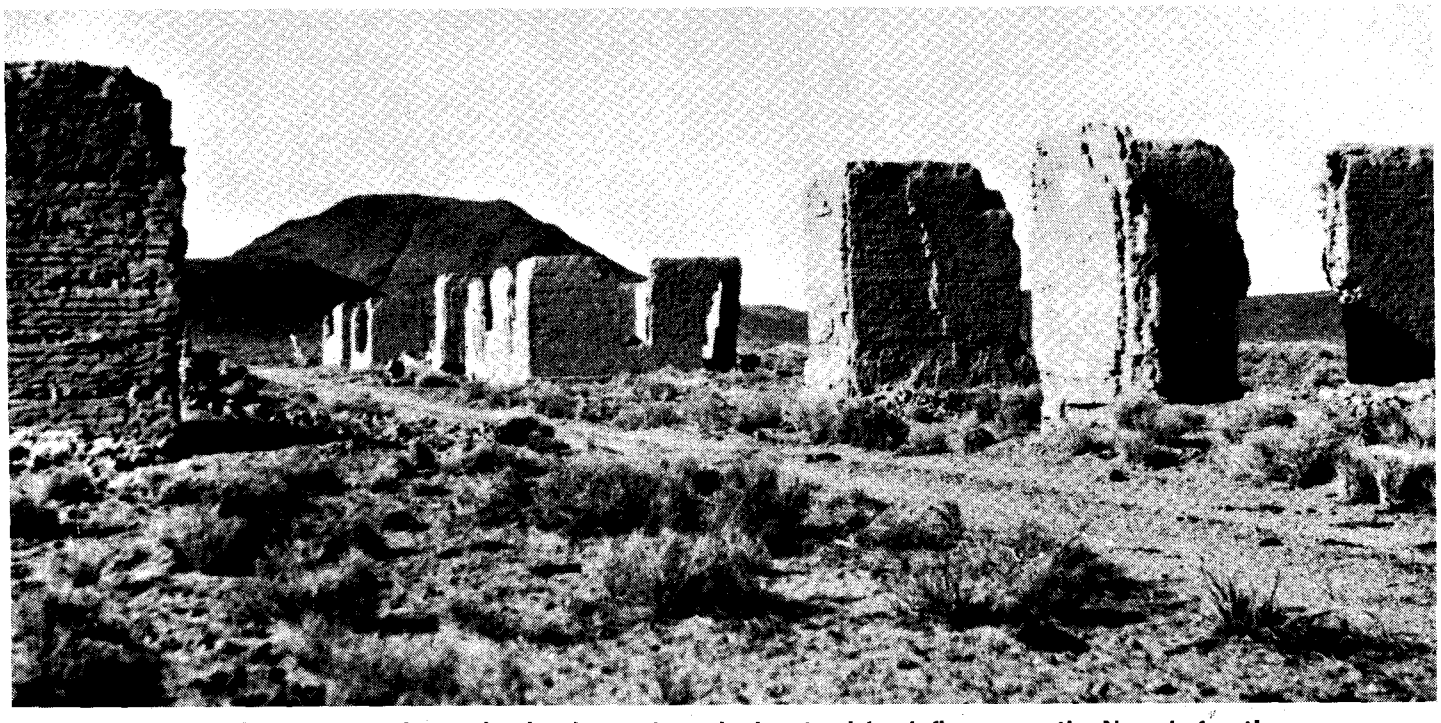


Pyramid Lake, an inland desert sea, the sacred stronghold of the Paiute and Bannack nations.



Fort Churchill in ruins... the desolate outpost had a steadying influence on the Nevada frontier.

sued from savage throats. In a few minutes it was over; six whites lay dead.

The Indians cut the squaws free and slipped knives into their ready hands. Gibbering with sadistic savagery, the women chopped and hacked at the six still bodies until they could no longer raise their hands. Their husbands dragged them to their feet and pushed them from the cabin. A dry pinon branch was ignited, and tossed inside.

Red fangs of flame engulfed the cabin, and the Indians chattered excitedly. Soon a great fountain of fire burst upward, coloring the sky a mottled red. The Indians silently vanished into the pockets of the night.

This was Nevada Territory in 1860. The year before two miners had made a strike in the Washoe Valley. Their "gold" turned out to be silver. The news leaked out. Immediately a stampede back across the high Sierras began. It seemed that every man who'd rushed to California in the course of ten years took part in it. They came by the hundreds—miners and prospectors, lawyers and merchants, gamblers and gunmen—an endless flood of fortune hunters.

An old story of the frontier began to repeat itself. The Paiute Indians saw the "silver fever" sweep across the country. The wild game began to disappear; the ducks and geese were frightened from the marshes; the pine nut trees were burned for firewood.

Chief Winnemucca called for a council at Pyramid Lake, a beautiful inland desert sea, sacred ground of the Paiute and Bannack Nations.

"The whites are as thick as sands on the lake shore," Winnemucca told his followers.

(Continued on page 55)

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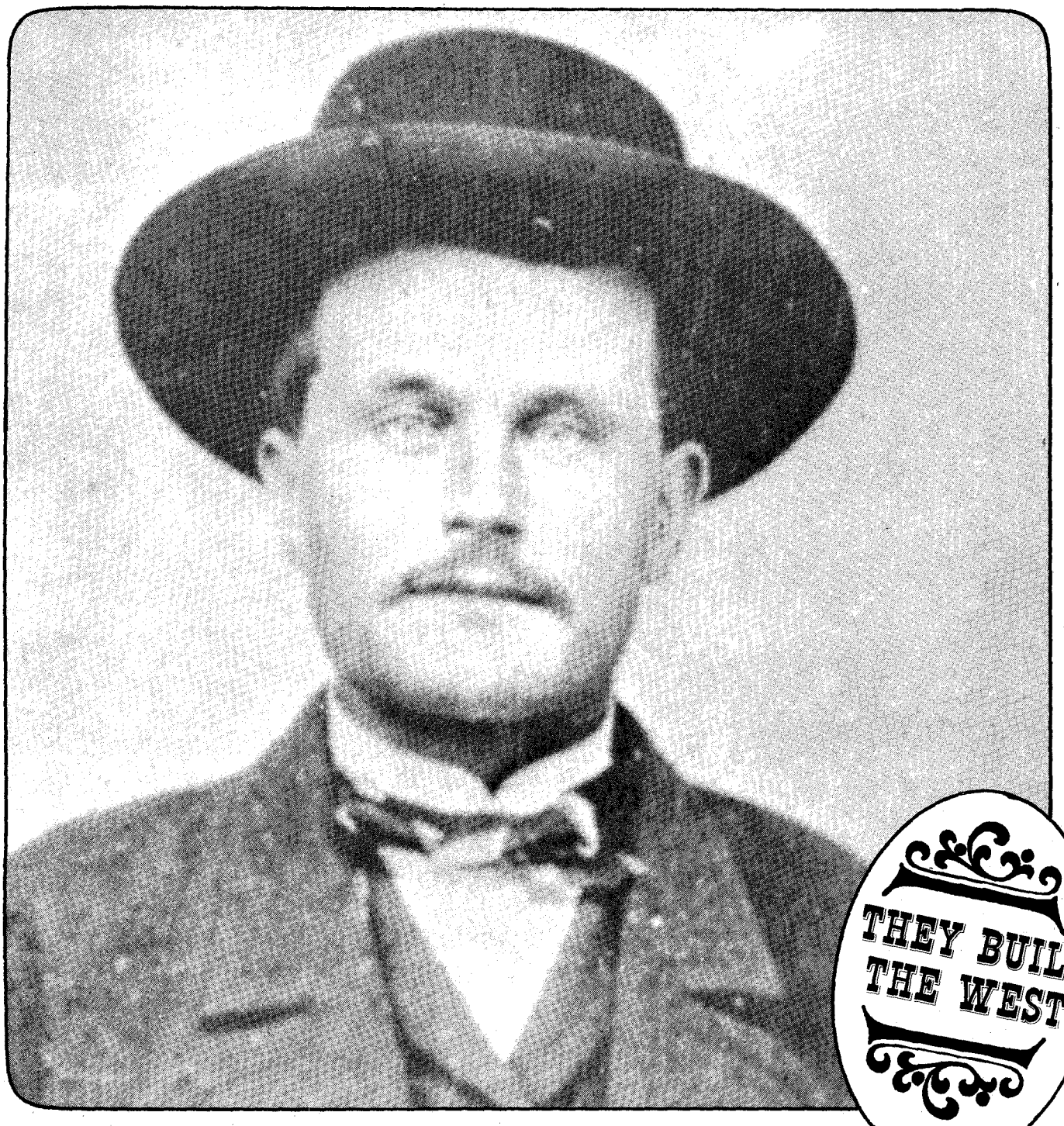
HARRY MORSE--



THEY BUILT THE WEST

A SYMBOL OF HONESTY, COURAGE AND DEDICATION

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By John H. Harrison

WILD BILL HICKOCK, Bat Masterson, Wyatt Earp, men of their stripe were the wild stallions in the great remuda of Old West lawmen ...fast on the draw and quick on the trigger.

Harry N. Morse, (Henry Nicholson Morse), Sheriff of Alameda County, California, 1863-1877, was the patient, plodding plow-horse, a Clydesdale among the mustangs.

Yet, when the final tally was made as to who brought the most "bad guys" to justice, dead or alive, Harry Morse's name led all the rest!

He did it the hard way; mainly by dogged persistance and raw courage at a time when California led the nation in hosting bandits, horse thieves, high way robbers, and cattle rustlers, dregs of the Gold Rush days, left-overs from a dead era.

Chileans, like Novatto Ponce, a cold-blooded murderer, would rather rob a dead victim than a live one. He had just shot old man Joy and stripped the corpse of a very thin purse at a stage-stop named Hayward which happened to be inside Sheriff Morse's bailiwick.

The trail led into the Black Hills south of Livermore, the next stage-stop east of Hayward. It was the dark of night when the hard riding Sheriff caught up with Ponce, ordering the latter to halt and throw down his gun.

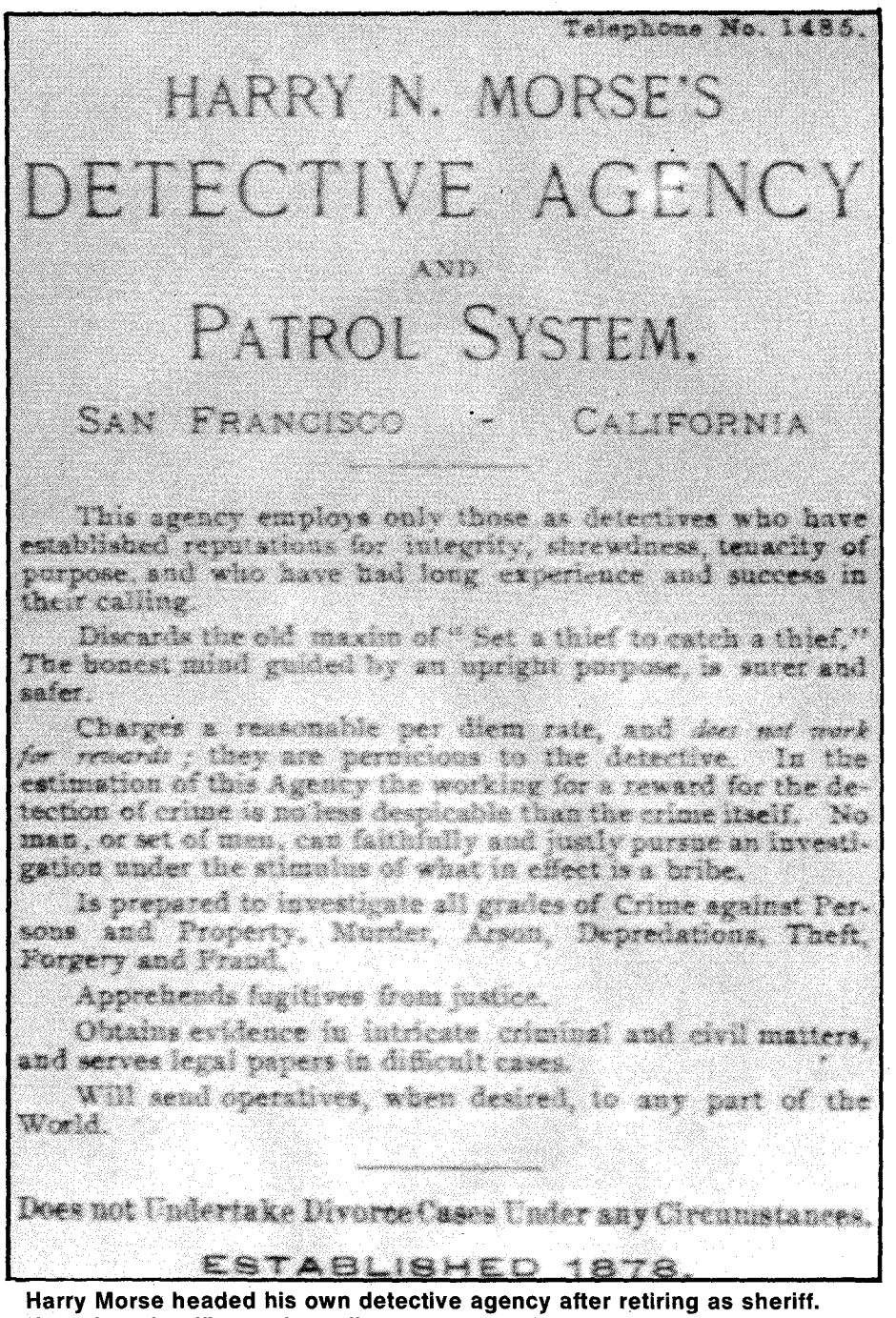
Instead, Ponce fired, putting a bullet so close to the Sheriff's head it left a powder burn on his cheek. Morse also fired, but low, killing the bandit's horse and catapulting its rider into a hay-stack beside the road.

It was one among several, and around and around them the two-man battle raged, each trying to outmaneuver the other and getting nowhere. Finally, in frustration, the Sheriff set fire to one of the stacks, hoping it would flush Ponce into the open. Unfortunately, the strategem came a few seconds too late. About the time Morse was putting match to hay, his adversary was slithering into a wash on the far side of the field; a wash that offered a perfect escape route and at least temporary safety. Temporary because Sheriff Morse was not one to desert a hot trail.

By noon the next day he had learned from patient sleuthing that Ponce was wounded and had holed up with a Mexican friend, Jose Rojos, at the latter's rancho in Pinole Canyon.

Not knowing how much help Ponce might have recruited, the

(Continued on page 20)



Telephone No. 1435.

HARRY N. MORSE'S

DETECTIVE AGENCY

AND

PATROL SYSTEM.

SAN FRANCISCO - CALIFORNIA

This agency employs only those as detectives who have established reputations for integrity, shrewdness, tenacity of purpose, and who have had long experience and success in their calling.

Discards the old maxim of "Set a thief to catch a thief." The honest mind guided by an upright purpose, is surer and safer.

Charges a reasonable per diem rate, and does not work for rewards; they are pernicious to the detective. In the estimation of this Agency the working for a reward for the detection of crime is no less despicable than the crime itself. No man, or set of men, can faithfully and justly pursue an investigation under the stimulus of what in effect is a bribe.

Is prepared to investigate all grades of Crime against Persons and Property, Murder, Arson, Depredations, Theft, Forgery and Fraud.

Apprehends fugitives from justice.

Obtains evidence in intricate criminal and civil matters, and serves legal papers in difficult cases.

Will send operatives, when desired, to any part of the World.

Does not Undertake Divorce Cases Under any Circumstances.

ESTABLISHED 1878.

Harry Morse headed his own detective agency after retiring as sheriff. Note that his office took no divorce cases—since divorce was something to which was attached quite a social stigma in Harry's detective days.

Sheriff Harry Morse could have gone on to even further riches and glory than that he already gained by capturing Tiburcio Vasquez in addition to Black Bart. But Harry Morse, above all else, was a man of honor. Who got the credit wasn't that important to him—as long as law and order was preserved

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Sheriff went after him with a posse. However, it proved unneeded. The fight that followed was strictly a man-to-man shoot-out. Ponce's wound had been minor; in no way impeding his ability with his gun hand. Finding himself cornered, he drew down on the Sheriff with a six-shot Colt "Peacemaker" and pulled the trigger.

Simultaneously, the Sheriff whipped up the muzzle of his Henry rifle. The two shots blended together but, fortunately, the Sheriff's was first by a split second, allowing him to scratch one desperado from his list and proceed with the business of the next one.

And there was always a "next one!"

Some were routine but others were hair-raising shoot-outs; so close-quartered that someone had to die. The Ponce affair in 1865 was one such. So was the one a few years later with Juan Soto.

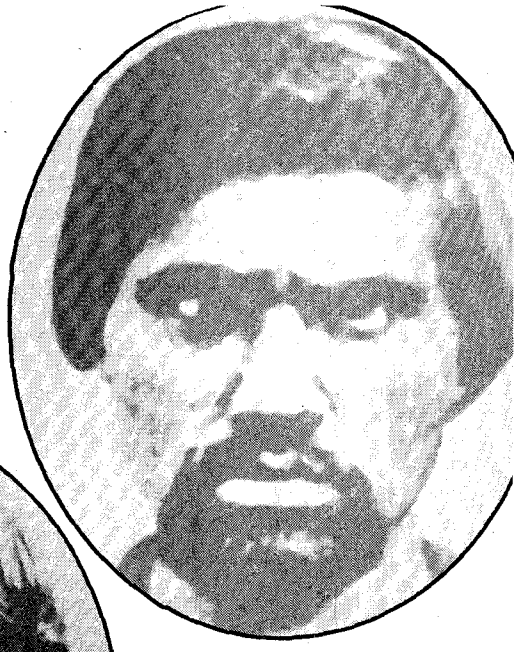
At the time, Soto, (three parts Indian to one part Mexican), was unquestionably the cruelest and most feared of all California outlaws. Even his own band feared him. He killed for the wanton thrill of killing and he held a special grudge against Sheriff Morse, vowing to blast the latter on sight.

The reason for this special attention was that he, Soto, knew that the Sheriff was tailing him; knew, too, that once Morse took the trail, all hell and high water couldn't shake him off.

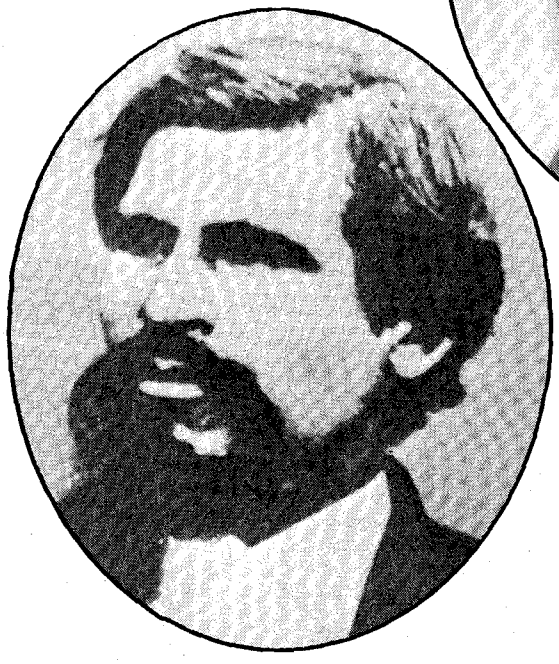
The Sheriff had equally good cause for wanting Soto. On a cold January morning Soto had hit Thomas Scott's store in Sunol Valley and, in typical fashion, had left a dead clerk behind him when he left with his loot.

Sheriff Morse got the message in the afternoon and rode all night to arrive at the scene the next morning. On determining for sure that it was a Soto job, he delved into a veritable storehouse of information he had accumulated on the bandit and came up with some answers.

One was that Soto's favorite hide-out nearest Sunol was the Pinoche Mountains south of present-day Gilroy. There was some swampy country in the area heavily over-grown with willows because of which it had acquired the name of Saucility, (Little Willows). A good place to hide until the heat was off.



Tiburcio Vasquez (below), scourge of southern California, was pursued for 45 days by Sheriff Morse. And when he found him, he allowed another sheriff to take the credit.



Juan Soto, considered California's meanest bandito (above), faced Sheriff Harry and lost.

So to Saucility rode Sheriff Morse and his eight man posse, gambling and praying his guess would prove to be an educated one.

It did!

At the entrance to the tiny valley he found three adobe cabins. Smoke was curling out of the chimney of one of them indicating that it, at least, was occupied. However, the Sheriff knew that these three cabins were mere out-posts. Soto's main hangout was a far more impressive complex at the upper end of the valley, out of sight beyond a rise. There, the Sheriff expected to find his man.

Accordingly, he split his forces, two men to each of the cabins and two more as over-all look-outs to give warning in case any of the desperadoes should come riding down from headquarters.

He himself, with Deputy Winchell to side him, dismounted about 30 yards from the front door of the cabin with the smoking chimney and advanced toward it. He had left his rifle in its saddle scabbard, feeling that his old reliable .44 S. & W. would be fire-power enough if any at all should be needed. Besides, Deputy Winchell cradled a double-barrelled shot-gun loaded with buck-shot—a decidedly lethal weapon at close quarters.

Sheriff Morse was hardly prepared for the confrontation he faced when he kicked the door open. Instead of one or two inocuous "paisanos," he found himself staring into the baleful eyes of killer Soto himself. Fortunately, the latter was a bit encumbered with a buxom senorita on his lap whose arms had instinctively clutched him tighter than ever around the neck when the door flew open. It gave the Sheriff the drop on his man and Winchell time to crowd in beside him with his shot-gun.

Soto and his woman were not alone. A half dozen of his "compadres" were with him, each with his own dusky paramour and all well fortified from the two half empty bottles of tequila on the table. Obviously the Sheriff had interrupted some pre-"baile" festivities; a warm-up for the night to follow. Surprise was about equal on both sides.

Sheriff Morse rapped out his now legendary "Put up your hands;" simultaneously centering the muzzle of his gun between Soto's eyes. Any ordinary bandito would have com-

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plied on the double. Not this one. He simply continued to glare back at the lawman, defying him to pull the trigger; at least, he glared back with his one good eye; the other one being focused at a crossed angle on the far wall.

Morse repeated his command but with the same impasse. He had never shot a man under quite such non-resistant circumstances. He couldn't do it now. It was like committing wanton murder.

"Put the cuffs on him," he ordered deputy Winchell, who had been keeping his trusty shot-gun weaving back and forth across the swarthy faces in front of him. Winchell hesitated, than shifted the gun to one hand. He was having trouble getting the cuffs free of his belt and probably anticipated having more trouble getting them un-locked.

There was a slight sound, the sibliant scarape of a foot sliding stealthily on the dirt floor. Winchell panicked. Hanging on to the gun, he backed out the door, then turned and raced for his horse. Seconds later he had scrambled aboard and bolted for safety, leaving the Sheriff to face the music alone.

There he stood with his levelled six-gun the only thing between him and his last breath—a rabbit in a den of rattlesnakes.

Action was not long delayed. The sound of movement that had caused Winchell to flee was the slithering foot of a female Amazon working her way inch by inch to a position behind the Sheriff. Suddenly she pounced, one hand grabbing for his gun, the other encircling his throat. She had the strength of a tigress.

"Ahora, Juan!" she screeched. "Ahora" means "now" and Juan didn't hesitate. He went for the pistol in his belt.

In the meantime Morse fought the Amazon. A frenzied effort broke her hold and he backed out the door, firing as he went. One bullet punctured Soto's hat. Another furrowed the table. Two misses at nine feet!

Soto also got off two shots; his aim, no better than the Sheriff's. Beyond the door, the latter continued backing away, intending to reach his horse and his Henry rifle hanging in its scabbard. Evidently he was more interested in getting there than he was in his pistol work because only one of his succeeding four shots did any damage. The bullet struck the cylinder of Soto's gun, jamming it and forcing the outlaw to retreat back inside the cabin.

There he traded coats with a compadre, re-armed himself with three revolvers, and stormed out the door again immediately behind the man who wore his coat.

Without a doubt the latter was the real hero of the whole affair. To invite death at 30 paces in order to save another man's hide takes guts of the highest order.

However, he was spared martyrdom. Sheriff Morse had been cozened by that trick before. This time it didn't work. There was too great a discrepency between sizes. Soto was a mountain of a man, six-feet two and well over 200 pounds. His "sacrificial lamb" was a typical Mexican, five feet-six, weighing a scant 120 pounds, bare-footed.

The Sheriff had reached his rifle and, as Soto dived for the concealment of some buck brush, the Sheriff drew a quick bead on him and fired. Throughout his career he had been a far better man with a long gun than with a short one. Now he proved it.

The bullet smacked into Soto's shoulder, spinning him around toward the cabin. He staggered inside, only to come charging out again, a gun blazing in each hand.

This time the Sheriff could be a shade more deliberate. He didn't pull the trigger until he was sure of his aim, and, when he did, he ended for all time the diabolical depredations of California's meanest outlaw. Soto died in his tracks with a bullet through his brain.

Ponce and Soto were but two of the many desperadoes Harry N. Morse faced at gunpoint within the span of his 14 years as Sheriff of Alameda County. Some he killed, but for each of the dead, he brought in a dozen alive. During those hectic years he never did become a trigger-happy pistol-packer.

More sleuth than gun-slinger was the reputation that stayed with him long after he had layed down his badge to establish his own detective agency in San Francisco in 1878, a very successful venture from the very day he opened it.

As evidence of this uncanny detective ability, consider his track-down of Black Bart.

This doggeral-writing, self-styled PO-8, small man of mystery, had been ghosting up and down California from the Siskiyous to the Tehachapis, Yreka to Bakersfield, for eight years, 1878-1883, robbing stages when and where he willed and eluding all efforts to apprehend him.

"Apprehend, hell!" The law couldn't even identify him! It hadn't the slightest idea what he looked like, his size, his weight, or the color of his skin. The legal docket on him, other than the date and place of his stick-ups, could have been written on the back of a postage stamp with room to spare.

On a Monday he'd draw down on the stage between Martell and Bedbug. Tuesday he might hit the one out of Chili Gulch, 40 miles away. Then again, he might hole up for a month or two or maybe show up in the wild Trinitys between Whiskeytown and Weaverville, or 100 miles east of there between Burney and Bieber.

Twenty-eight times in those eight years his deep, resonant voice had bawled "Throw down the box!" and 27 of those times the driver had complied.

That 28th time had been different. The confounded box was bolted to the floor inside the passenger compartment. No one was about to throw it down. It happened near the top of the grade on Funk Hill, a mile and a half north of Reynolds Ferry out of Chinese Camp in Tuolumne County.

Getting that strongbox unbolted and opened had been both time consuming and frustrating. It had been well banded with iron, chained, and double padlocked.

Bart had ordered the stage on ahead and it was a half hour gone before he finally got his hands on the 228 ounces of the gold-impregnated amalgum inside along with 500 dollars in coin, and 65 dollars in dust. Incidentally, it was the richest single haul he ever made despite distorted legend to the contrary.

In the meantime, an unusual circumstance had been bothering him. He had caught a quick glimpse of a young boy prowling the woods near the base of the grade. Actually, the boy, son of "Grandma" Rolleri who operated the ferry, was hunting rabbits and hadn't even seen Bart higher up the hill. However, sighting the lad had worried the highwayman to the extent that, in departing, he forgot all about the tell-tale clues he had left behind some brush on top of a ledge over-looking the road where he had patiently awaited the arrival of the stage—a hat, a suitcase, and a

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handkerchief.

When Wells-Fargo got word of this latest of the elusive bandit's depredations they declared all-out war on him. For eight years he had mocked them, fattening his purse on their money. Thirty thousand dollars was enough! This time they'd get him!

To help things along, they offered an 800 dollar reward for his capture and conviction. In addition, they brought in their top detective, J. B. Hume, and his chief deputy, telling Hume if he wanted more help, get it. He wanted it and he got it, the extra help being none other than ex-Sheriff Harry N. Morse.

Now J. B. Hume was no self-effacing violet. He had plenty of confidence in his own sleuthing abilities. Hiring Morse was somewhat a sop to his superiors which he proved by giving the latter the least of the clues found on the ledge, the soiled handkerchief. He himself took the suitcase plus whatever else it contained, assigning the hat to his deputy. Thus equipped, each went his own way on his own time.

In accepting the handkerchief, Morse had not quibbled. In fact, had he had a choice, it would have been the same. In one corner of it he had noticed a laundry mark, F.X.O.7.

Now there weren't many cities in California at that time so metropolitan as to rate a laundry mark. San Francisco, the very one in which he had established his private detective business, was one of them. The fly in the ointment was that there were 91 laundries in town. Checking them out, one by one, would be a monumental task calling for not egg-head deductions but plain old pounding the sidewalks, door to door. A week of patient inquiry paid off. The mark belonged, not to a laundry after all, but to an agency, a Mr. Thomas C. Ware of 316 Bush Street.

Did he know whom it had been assigned to?

"Certainly, to a good patron of mine," he stated. "A fine gentlemen of means by the name of Charles E. Bolton."

A mining man, he believed him to be, with extensive holdings up and down the Mother Lode country. When in town, he could be found at the Webb House over on Mission Street.

"In fact, he just might be there now, this being November and him home for the winter."

So to the Webb House and a confrontation with Mr. Bolton went Morse, actually, to several confrontations.

The small, trim, dapper "mining man" was as elusive about his personal affairs as about his "other" activities. In fact, that was what he was trying desperately to avoid. Getting caught.

But he was up against the best man in the state in the business of squeezing answers out of a reluctant mouth. Bit by bit, word by word, it became increasingly apparent that Charles E. Bolton, well dressed, well bred, and well heeled, was one and the same as Black Bart, the bold highwayman of PO-8 fame, a Jeckyl and Hyde masquerade to which he finally confessed and for which he was tried, convicted and sentenced to six years in San Quentin prison as inmate No. 11046.

The Ponce and Soto man-to-man shoot-outs had highlighted Harry Morse's raw courage. The Black Bart case had equally high-lighted his phenominal detective ability. There was still a third facet to his character, an indominatable persistance that, once on a trail, kept him there until, by either death or capture, the case was closed.

For instance, he tailed Tomaso Redundo, terror of the ranch owners, rustler, horse-thief and highwayman, reputed cousin of Joaquin Murietta, a thousand miles before he tracked him down!

Again, in 1868, he dogged murderer Joe Newell 1200 miles including two crossings of the Sierras in bitter winter weather, before finally putting the cuffs on him.

There were dozens of other such treks which, if added up over the 40 years of his crime-curbing career, would have encircled the globe twice over. The greatest single one of them in time consumed and miles travelled was probably that of his 45-day pursuit of the notorious Tiburcio Vasquez, scourge of southern California in the early 1870's.

Morse was still Sheriff of Alameda County abutting the San Francisco Bay area. Bitter rivalry existed at the time between his section of the State and that lying south of the Tehachapis, especially Los Angeles County, where Sheriff John Rowland wore the bodge with great pride and even greater jealousy.

By 1874 Vasquez's murderous sorties had become so blatant and all efforts to capture him such miserable failures, that in January, Governor Newton Booth appointed Sheriff Morse to "go get him; dead or alive!"

Since much of the bandit's work had been in Los Angeles County, Sheriff Rowland looked upon the Governor's appointment with a jaundiced eye—especially so after the legislature sweetened the pot with 3,000 dollars expense money. Capture rewards had risen another eight thousand dollars. As Rowland figured, the Governor had layed the golden egg in the wrong lap. He, Rowland, should have had the appointment—not Harry Morse.

Morse began the track-down on March 3rd, 1874, accompanied by seven deputies, all of whom were experienced lawmen. Between that date and May 4th he and his posse rode 2,700 miles in a fruitless effort to catch up with evasive Vasquez. The wily bandito was always at least one campfire ahead.

In and out of countless canyons of the Tehachapis, across the San Joaquin Valley and into the barren east slopes of the Coast Ranges, Morse ferreted out every known hide-out his quarry had ever used; sometimes so close as to find embers still glowing; but never Tiburcio.

Finally, on May 4th his tenacity paid off. Not that he caught up with Vasquez. He didn't. But he did find out where the villain had holed up, not within the area he was searching at the moment, but far to the south on the other side of the Tehachapis in Los Angeles County, where Sheriff Rowland jealously guarded his prerogatives.

The hide-out was in the Cahuenga Hills near present Hollywood at an adobe and clapboard shack owned and occupied by one George Allen, known better as "Anistables" and "Greek George," a character about as unsavory as Vasquez himself.

Sheriff Morse got the tip-off from one of the bandit's disillusioned followers. It seems the latter had an attractive "enamorata" and was doing all right until the handsome "Boss" came around, whereupon the "enamorata" switched allegiance and her erstwhile paramour swore vengeance.

Not about to face Vasquez man-to-man, he rode hard for Sheriff Morse's camp, locating it in Tejon Pass, some 60 miles north of Los Angeles. There he told all.

To the harrassed Sheriff it was wonderful news. He and his posse

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Agents of W., F. & Co. will not post this circular, but place them in the hands of your local and county officers, and reliable citizens in your region. Officers and citizens receiving them are respectfully requested to preserve them for future reference.

Agents WILL PRESERVE a copy on file in their office.

$800.00 Reward!

ARREST STAGE ROBBER!

1.

On the 3d of August, 1877, the stage from Fort Ross to Russian River was stopped by one man, who took from the Express box about $500, coin, and a check for $305.52, on Grangers' Bank of San Francisco, in favor of Fisk Bros. The Mail was also robbed. On one of the Way Bills left with the box the Robber wrote as follows:—

"I've labored long and hard for bread—
For honor and for riches—
But on my corns too long you've tred,
You fine haired sons of bitches.
BLACK BART, the P.o.8.

Driver, give my respects to our friend, the other driver; but I really had a notion to hang my old disguise hat on his weather eye. (*for simile.*)

Respectfully
B. B.

It is believed that he went to the Town of Guerneville about daylight next morning.

2.

About one year after above robbery, July 25th, 1878, the Stage from Quincy to Oroville was stopped by one man, and W., F. & Co.'s box robbed of $379, coin, one Diamond Ring, (said to be worth $200) one Silver Watch, valued at $25. The Mail was also robbed. In the box, when found next day, was the following, (*for simile*):—

here I lay me down to sleep
to wait the coming morrow
perhaps success perhaps defeat
and everlasting sorrow
I've labored long and hard for bread
for honor and for riches
But on my corns too long you've tred
You fine haired sons of bitches
let come what will I'll try it on
my condition can't be worse
and if there's money in that Box
Tis mainly in my purse
Black Bart

A reward poster (above) gets a visit from the elusive Dapper Dan of the desperadoes—Black Bart (left)—and a sample of Black Bart's poetry. But not even he was a match for Morse.

were bone thin from long hours in the saddle and scant rations. They were dog-tired and dirty, discouraged and ready to call it off. The turncoat's story was Manna from heaven.

Hearing it, they rode straighter and caressed their pistol butts in anticipation of soon using them. But no! It was not to be. Sheriff Morse's innate scruples caught up with him. Greek George's shack was in Los Angeles County and Los Angeles County was the lawful bailiwick of Sheriff Rowland. To the latter belonged the honor and the glory.

So, leaving his posse at the Pass, he rode south, down the old Butterfield Stage route into the San Fernando Valley, across it right on through the Cahuenga Hills without a side-glance in Greek George's direction, on to the County Courthouse where Sheriff Rowland sat in satisfied contemplation of himself.

He had just been praised for maintaining such a crime-clean county. Consequently, when told by Morse that the State's most wanted murderer was hiding out right under his nose, he hit the proverbial ceiling.

"Hog wash!" he roared. "Somebody's pulling your leg, Morse. If Vasquez was in this county, I'd know it and you can bet your bottom dollar on that!"

Harry Morse did his best to convince the L. A. Sheriff that he was wrong, but he might as well have saved his wind. The more he talked the more obnoxious the other lawman got.

"If Vasquez is anywhere, he's up there in your country," he swore, "not down here in mine and I don't appreciate your poking your beak into it, either. Go on back and leave this end of the State to me."

So Sheriff Morse rode back to Tejon Pass, again bypassing the hideout in the Cahuenga Hills. Behind him was sudden and frenzied activity.

Hardly had he reached the San Fernando Valley than Sheriff Rowland had collected a posse of his own and was riding hell-for-leather to Greek George's. All his deprecating of Morse's information had been a sham, a means of getting the latter out of the way. With 8,000 dollars riding on the line, not to mention the honor and the glory, he was not about to split the plum any more ways then he had to.

Morse's information could not have been more accurate. Tiburcio Vasquez was there inside Greek George's shack. He dived through a window in a desperate effort to escape, but a blast of buckshot in the shoulder changed his mind. The rest is history. Vasquez was hanged in San Jose on the 19th day of March, 1875, at 1:35 p.m. and pronounced dead eight minutes later.

Sheriff Rowland got all the plaudits for the capture. He also got the $8,000.

About all Sheriff Morse got out of it was home. However, at least financially, it was no great loss. He was already well on the way to becoming a wealthy man.

Shrewd business and real-estate investments were paying off handsomely and continued to do so long after he unpinned his badge in 1877 to devote the rest of his law career as head of his own private detective agency, a position from which he did not abdicate until 1903 at the age of 68. He died January 11, 1912, leaving a half-million dollar estate and a reputation for honesty, courage, and dedication to duty unsurpassed by any other lawman of the Old West. ●

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Nebraska Historical Society

Nebraska farmer fighting grasshopper pests in his corn field.

THE TERROR OF 1874

Indians, disease and bandits — none of these compared with the horror that came out of the skies over Kansas and Nebraska in 1874

by Felton Monroose and Merton Maryman

IT WAS the most terrifying catastrophe the Great Plains country had ever known. There had been Indians, outlaws, disease, cyclones and many other things to discourage the early settlers, but none of these had brought such complete devastation.

The prairies where my family lived felt its impact in the early summer of 1874, ten years before I was born. As a child I lived under the cloud of that devastation and heard the story of those terrible days so many times that even now I can repeat what my father said about them word for word.

I'm an old-timer and there aren't many of us left who lived under this dark cloud. Attempts have been made to describe the devastation, but I have never read an account that gave a full picture of the horror. With the aid of Merton Maryman, I'll try to tell the full story of the tragedy.

In 1872 my father and mother, young newlyweds, went to Nebraska to homestead a quarter section 30 miles from the present city of Beatrice. They were young enough to accept the dust, the heat, and the loneliness. They built a sod house and broke 40 acres that first year.

By 1874 they had 80 acres in corn and oats, and behind the house they had planted fruit trees, hoping in time to have an orchard. Mother had a large garden. That spring of 1874 was warm with plenty of rain and the crops grew large and green. Life seemed pretty good to father and mother.

They did have a small warning of the catastrophe. That spring homesteaders scanning the skies for weather signs had seen whirling silver and gray disc-like objects that had a strange buzzing sound. Some of the farmers and ranchers took them for "sun dogs," the splotches that appear near the sun during dry weather. But sun dogs made no buzzing sounds. Many of the settlers felt they were viewing some kind of mirage.

Then in June the whirling silver discs began falling to the ground. When examined they were found to be a strange looking grasshopper, not the greenish-brown small native grasshoppers. From the adjoining county came reports of a large number of these funny looking grasshoppers, but nobody paid much attention to those reports, as it was hard to figure how a grasshopper could do any damage.

Then came the morning of June 5th, 1874. Father was in the field hoeing corn. His corn stood a good five-feet and was a brilliant green. Father was figuring how many bushels it would make to the acre. There was a strange far away buzzing sound but father didn't look up. The buzzing grew louder and then suddenly the day was as dark as night!

The buzzing had become a thundering roar. Small creatures crashed against

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his face. His first thought was that a cyclone had struck. The darkness began to lift and he peered through the half light toward the sod house. By this time the silvery grasshoppers were crawling down his shirt and under his overalls.

Father started for the house, not knowing what was happening. The buzzing roar had given way to a different sound, a snip-snap. Later he knew this sound meant the grasshoppers were eating his corn. By the time he got to the sod house, the grasshoppers were crawling all over his face and his eyes, blinding him.

The path to the house was so full of them and his boots crushed masses of them. He kept brushing hoppers from his eyes, kept trying to reach his home because he was as fearful for his family as any pioneer whose loved ones were being menaced by Indians.

The outside walls of the soddy were completely covered with hoppers when father stumbled into the yard. So were the walls of his barn and the outhouse. The hoppers had devoured the flowers that mother had planted in the yard. They had stripped the leaves from the big cottonwood tree which had been on the place when he'd bought it. They were even devouring the bale of hay placed in a feed pen for the stock.

The door of the house was also a solid mass of the pests. Hundreds flew in when father opened the door. Mother was holding my older sister, almost two years old, who was crying hysterically. Father stamped as many of the pests to death as he could.

Mother, with the assurance that frontier women had to maintain, was trying to quiet her child. She told father that she'd been outside drawing water from the well when the hoppers came down suddenly and swarmed over her and began chewing at the pulley rope. She rushed into the house with grasshoppers all over her.

"Where's Herman?" Mother asked anxiously. "He was out looking for a pig that had strayed when it started raining grasshoppers."

That minute, the question answered itself. The door opened again and in

Kansas State Historical Society

"Grangers Versus Hoppers," was illustrated by this sketch from Downing's Gallery, Topeka, Kan.

Drawing below was captioned: "The extra inducements offered to those who would go west at present time."

Kansas State Historical Society

stepped Herman Rose, the hired man. Herman's blond hair was covered with a moving mass of hoppers. They'd eaten most of his straw hat. The long-legged insects were two inches thick on the legs of his levis. They were crawling in columns around his blue denim shirt.

"The grasshoppers have got all our corn," he said. "But maybe we can save our vegetable garden. We'd better move fast if we don't want to starve."

The grasshoppers were a foot high on the roof of the soddy when the two men rushed out toward the garden some ten yards to the right of the house.

"It was like walking in ink," father used to say. "Every step you put down, you touched hoppers. Every step you felt their juices drenching you and had to smell their awful smell."

The hoppers had started on the beans and the squashes when the two reached the garden. Father began throwing blankets across the rows of plants. The hoppers took flight in a whirling cloud. Herman kept waving other blankets to scare off fresh batches that tried to land.

Finally all the vegetable rows were covered. Father let out a long weary sigh. "That'll take care of the garden if the so-and-so's don't eat blankets, too. Let's see *(Continued on page 54)*

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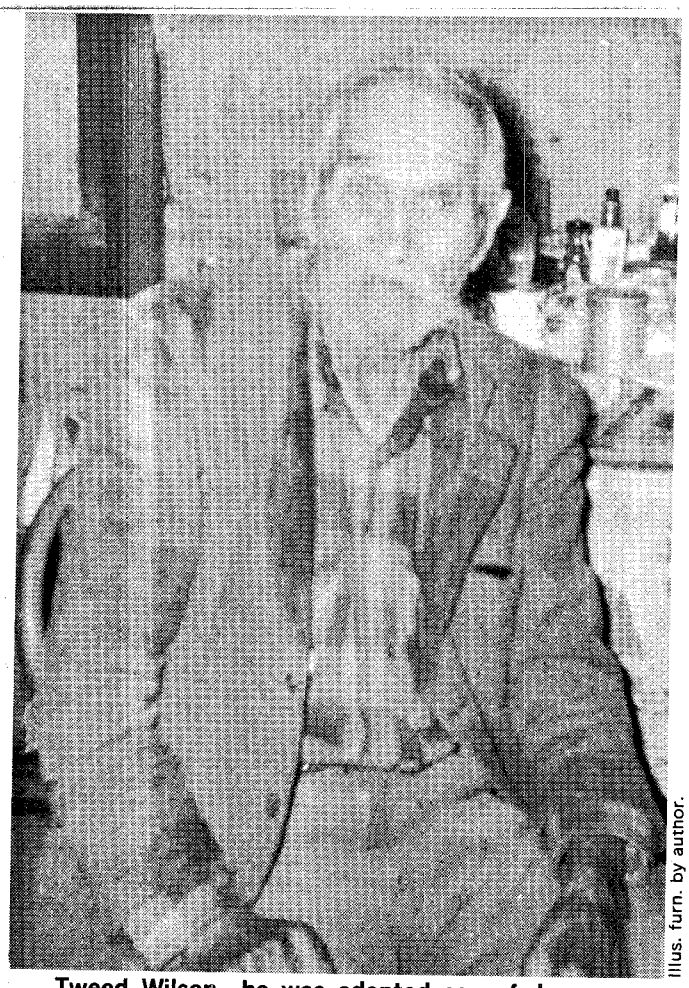
Wilson was a man unlucky in love, but he didn't allow personal disappointments to interfere with his destiny as a pioneer instrumental in shaping the land he loved...

Illus. furn. by author.

This stone house used by Anderson and Wilson was built by grain traders from Ivanpah before 1864.



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Tweed Wilson—he was adopted son of James.

JAMES BERNARD WILSON

by Maryellen Vallier Sadovich

JANUARY 16, 1864, was the day a twenty-two-year-old Scottish sailor abandoned his ship at San Pedro, California, to test his luck in the gold fields. George Robert Anderson found no satisfaction in the mines, but he did secure a job driving a freight wagon from San Bernardino via Las Vegas and El Dorado Canyon to Fort Mojave on the Colorado River.

With George Anderson came the beginning of a love story more fantastic than fiction, and the beginning of a new settlement in the Las Vegas Valley of Southern Nevada.

Early in 1864, Anderson made the acquaintance of thirty-year-old Corporal James Bernard Wilson, who was stationed with the California Volunteers at Fort Mojave. From this post, Wilson had roamed the countryside and had made up his mind to make a home in the desert near the abandoned Mormon mission building of Las Vegas. Wilson was discharged from military duties in 1864, and with some financial aid from his friend George Anderson, he acquired the lands surrounding the big bubbling spring Fremont had described in 1844.

To these lands he brought cattle from California, with the idea of adding fresh dairy products to the list of articles George Anderson supplied to the Colorado River settlements.

Lonely in his new home, Wilson spent long hours in the Paiute camp near Las Vegas, where the young Anderson had taken for his wife one of the most beautiful and charming girls Wilson had ever seen. Her baby, the name of whose father she could not remember, was her pride and joy. Since she was very much in love with redheaded George Anderson and spent much time with him, friend Wilson was left often to baby-sit the little half-breed child whom he would eventually come to love as his own son.

Scouting the countryside whenever he had time, Wilson became familiar with the uninhabited lands of Southern Nevada. Through his friendship with the Indians he was led to the many springs and grassy areas where he staked claims, knowing they would serve as perfect pastures for his increasing herd.

While sojourning in the Spring Mountain area above Cottonwood Spring late in 1867, he found a one-room stone cabin on the bank of a sparkling cold stream in the middle of a grassy valley surrounded by tall, red sandstone cliffs. Grain traders from Ivanpah, California, some sixty miles away, had built the house earlier in the year when they made the long trek into Nevada searching for suitable areas for raising hay and grain. This was their business, and they sold these farm products for high prices to isolated Ivanpah miners.

Wilson staked claim to these lands, calling his new possession "Sandstone Ranch." He sold his Las Vegas home to Octavius D. Gass of Callville. (This would be the beginning of the million dollar estate until recently owned by the late German heiress Vera Krupp.)

Wilson and Anderson moved their stock to the Sandstone Ranch and lived in the deserted stone cabin all that winter. In spring of 1868, they built a log house a few yards from the cabin, and planted grain and garden vegetables. Here on the ranch, Anderson's Indian wife and many of her friends and relatives

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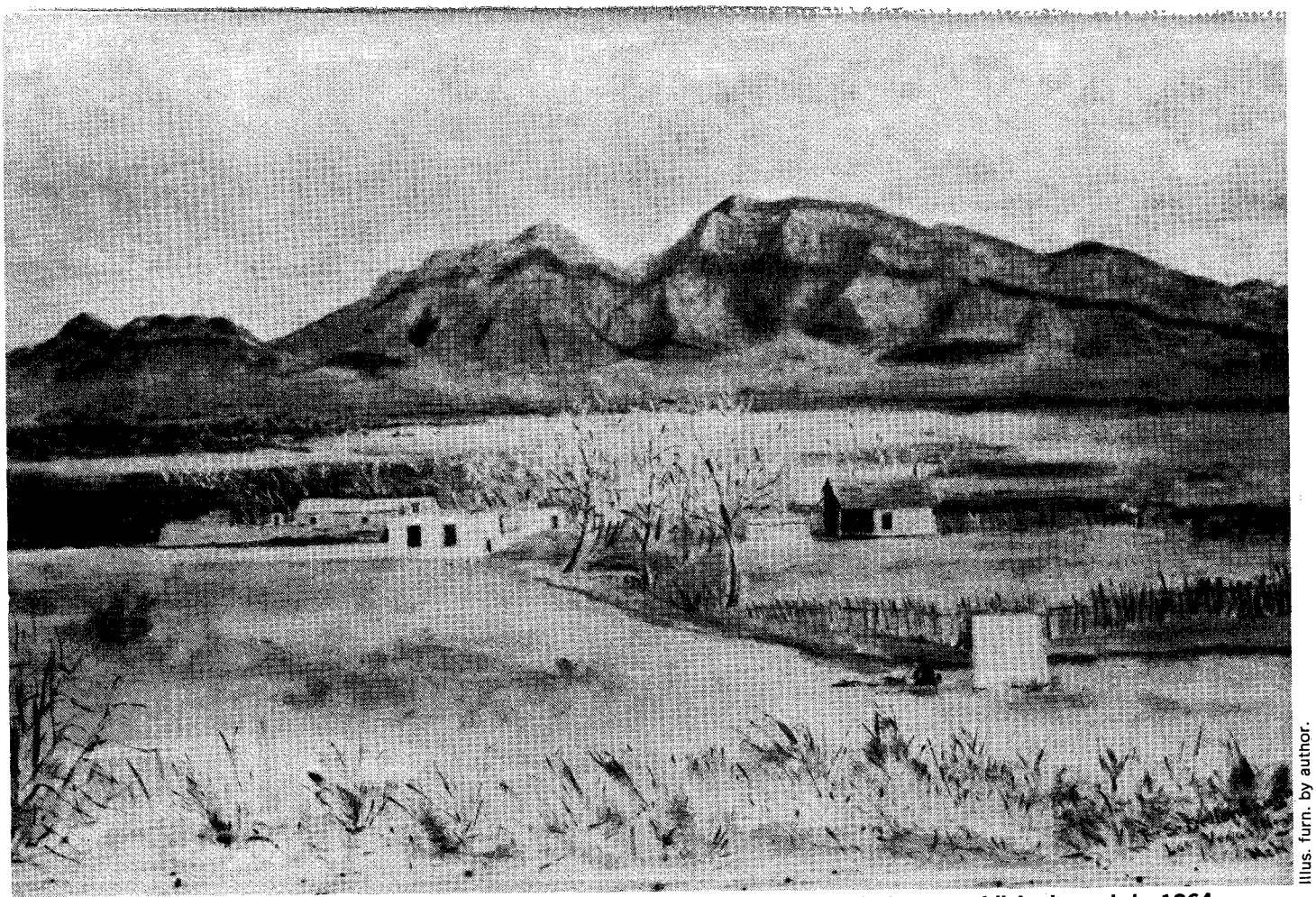


Illus. furn. by author.

Around these abandoned Mormon mission buildings James Bernard Wilson established ranch in 1864.

— FORGOTTEN PIONEER

worked to take care of the chores waiting to be done.

Anxious to attach himself in some way to the only girl he had ever loved, despite the fact that she was only half his age, a full-blooded Paiute, and desperately in love with his best friend, Wilson arranged to give his name to her little son. Almost ten years later, on October 28, 1876, both Anderson and Wilson were shocked when Anderson's wife died a few hours after giving birth to another child, her second boy.

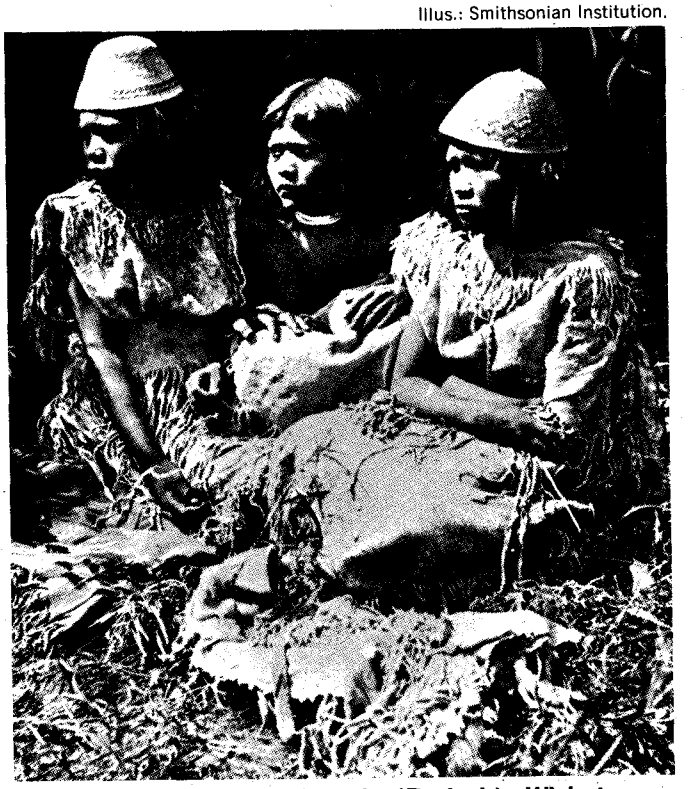
This baby was named George Twison Anderson after his father, and soon became known as Tweed Anderson. He was brought up on the Sandstone Ranch, and since his father was away on trading expeditions most of the time, James Bernard Wilson soon found he had another "son" to care for. After Anderson's death, this boy also took Wilson's name, and came in time to be called Tweed Wilson.

The Sandstone ranch proved to be profitable, and for many years Wilson provided fresh produce, meat, and other products to travelers who passed the ranch which by this time extended to the California road.

Writing to the author in 1959, F.R. Gass, youngest son of Octavius D. Gass, recalled his years at Las Vegas saying, "The nearest white persons at that time were George Anderson and James Wilson. My Mother helped with young George Anderson, as there were no other white women permanently in the area."

In an effort to provide some education for his boys, Wilson sought the services of James MacGarigle. An old man by 1887, this Scotsman had been employed by the Federal Government in 1870 as a teacher for the *(Continued on page 48)*

Illus.: Smithsonian Institution.



Antinaints (Posy); Putusiv (Eyelash); Wichuts (Birdie): Paiute girls of Las Vegas Valley, (1873)

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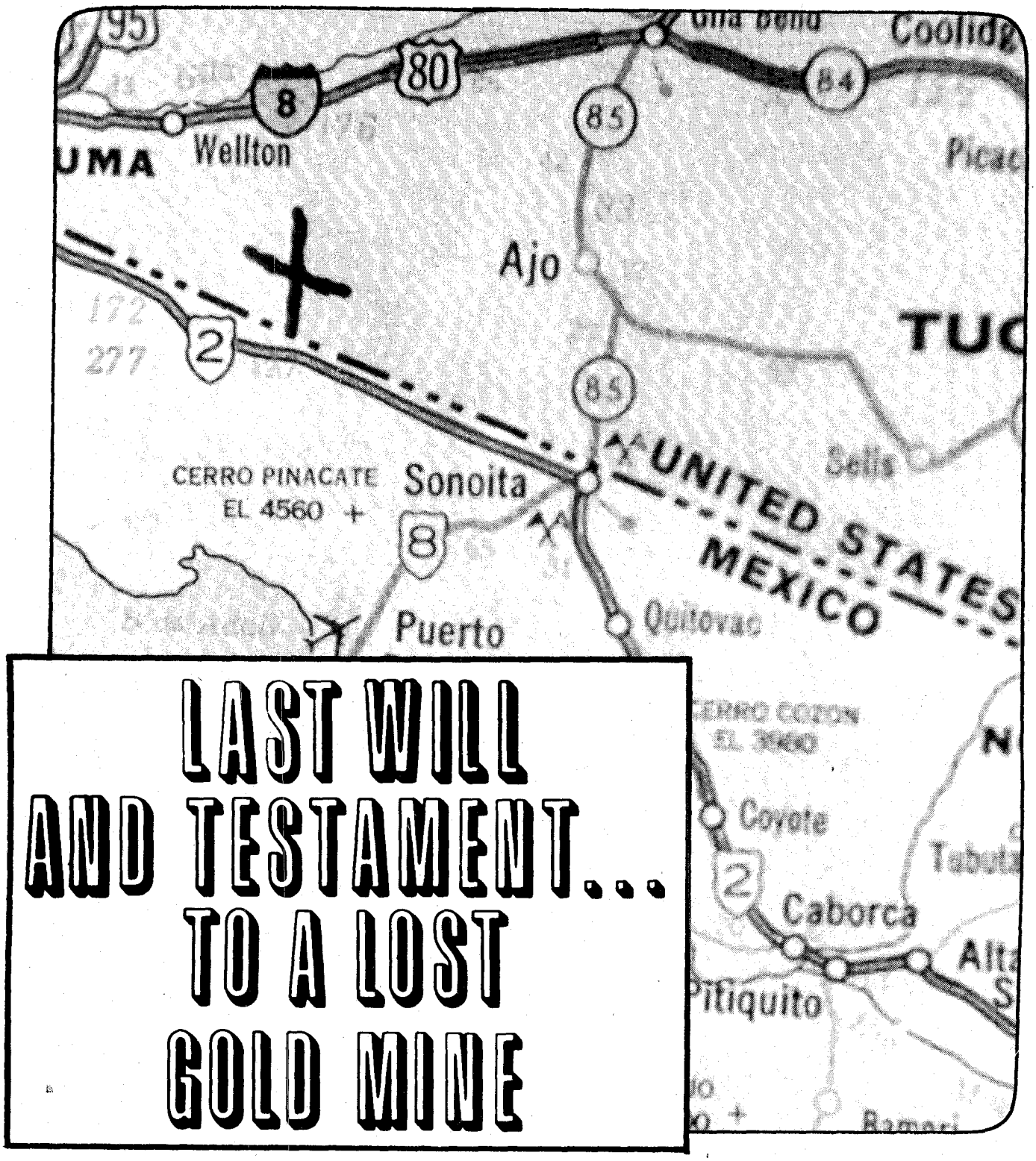

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT... TO A LOST GOLD MINE

The Treasure's Still Waiting To Be Found

It was one of the strangest wills ever written. Yet the treasure to be handed down was never found. It remains there to this day—for anyone brave enough to try and find it

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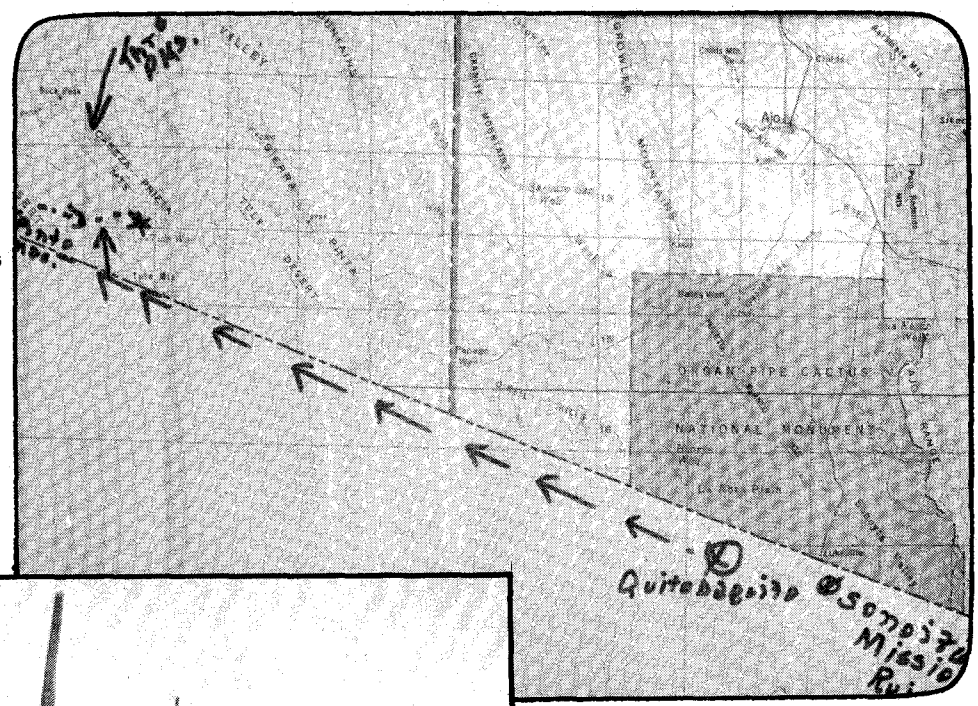
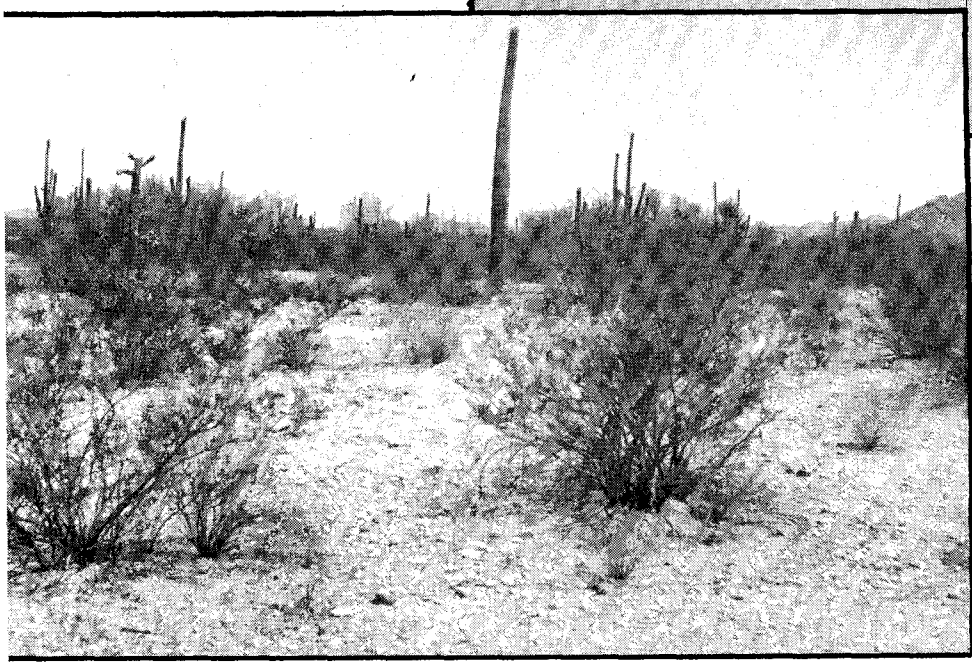
By Xanthus Carson



The "X" on the map (opposite page) marks the spot on a present-day road map of the lost gold mine's location. Mexico Route 2 is the El Camino Del Diablo. The soapmaker's waybill path (right) leads to the mine, about 25 miles northwest of the Mexican town of Sonoita. The Pinto Mountains (below) in the background is where the gold was found "scattered on the hillside." The point from which this picture was taken—about four miles northwest of Sonoita—was noted in the soapmaker's will.



LUCK HADN'T FAVORED two California gold miners in 1859 so they decided to pull stakes and head for home.

They were traveling on horseback from Fort Yuma to the ancient Mexican town of Sonoita, just across the international boundary from today's Gringo Pass, Arizona. They were struggling along over the precarious Camino del Diablo (Devil's Road) in a desperate effort to reach home and relatives before their scant supply of provisions petered out.

The unfortunate two had only a few remaining miles to cover. Yet the worst was ahead. El Camino del Diablo could snuff out their lives before they could ever reach help. This they well knew, because they were natives of the Sonoita country, and knew its dangers well.

More than 400 people had perished while attempting to cross the deadly stretch during the first years of the gold strike. During this time the trail had been literally lined with graves of those who died along its horrible stretches. Even today it is not uncommon to encounter scattered human bones along the trail, bones which have resulted from an improper burial of some who failed to make it.

Nightfall caught the former gold miners in the Cabeza Prieta Mountains, an extremely dreaded wasteland of very rugged terrain, blowing sand, volcanic rock, cactus growth, and other thorny desert plants. Water in these mountains has always been as scarce as hens' teeth, in most areas being as many as three days between holes.

After passing Tule Well, the most dependable water source in the mountainous area, the men decided to make a dry camp and resume the few remaining miles to Sonoita at daybreak the following morning.

After stripping saddle gear and hobbling their horses, they rolled up in blankets by the side of the sandy trail to sleep, dead-tired from the long hours of precarious travel.

Rising early the next morning, the men soon discovered that one of the saddle horses had broken hobbles and strayed. After a little discussion during which time they smoked a cigaret, the men decided to tie the extra saddle and camp equipment on one horse. Then one of them would start walking down the trail, leading the horse toward Sonoita.

The other agreed to trail the strayed animal and later overtake his partner. Following the horse's path, the foot wrangler soon found the saddle horse. He mounted bareback and rode to a nearby mountain slope to locate his companion down the trail, in order to know the direction he'd need to take.

On the slope he noticed a lot of strange-looking rocks. He jumped from his horse and picked up four or five pieces, seeing that the mountain slope was covered with the same sort of stuff. The man was flabbergasted and elated. He later described his discovery:

"The damn rocks were pretty near all gold, full of it. More gold than rock."

Two-thirds of a ton of this sort of stuff would certainly line one's pocket with a lot of money, we'd say. Not hay!

The Sonoita native lost no time in over-taking his partner, and eagerly told him about his discovery.

(Continued on page 30)

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Gringo Pass, Arizona (above) is the key to the waybill for the lost gold mine. Right: A group of typical miners of the early period.

The man that day arrived in Sonoita, carried away with what they had found on a Cabeza Prieta mountain slope. They were eager to return and start raking in the gold. But they had no money with which to buy the necessary provisions to start mining.

For a while they didn't know what to do. Then they thought of a Sonoita soap maker whom they had known before going away to the California gold fields. He had money, they knew. The two set out and contacted the man, whose name was Pablo Cordova, and told him the story of their gold discovery. And, just to make their proposition for a grubstake more impressive, they carried the soap maker to a mesa, about two miles northwest of town.

Once on the mesa, the three men faced El Camino del Diablo and the Cabeza Prietas about 25 or 30 miles to the northwest. Then one said, "See those Pinto Mountains? There I found the gold, scattered down the hillside. We will start early in the morning, load the mules with ore, and be back here by evening."

(After looking this rugged terrain over recently, we are impressed that the zealous miner over-estimated the travel time).

After talking for a while, the old village soap maker became anxious to buy provisions and pack mules and strike out for the gold-bearing mountain. While there on the mesa the three made a trade, and the following morning they left, headed for the mountains.

After traveling for several hours the party decided to pitch camp on the slope of one of three outstanding peaks, which could be seen from Quitobaquito, an age-old settlement west of Sonoita. The party was then in the area of the mountain slope where the miner had found the gold.

During the night Indians swept down upon the camp with a ferocious attack, a practice for which the mountain tribes had been known since history. The California miners were brutally butchered, without so much as a chance to clammer from

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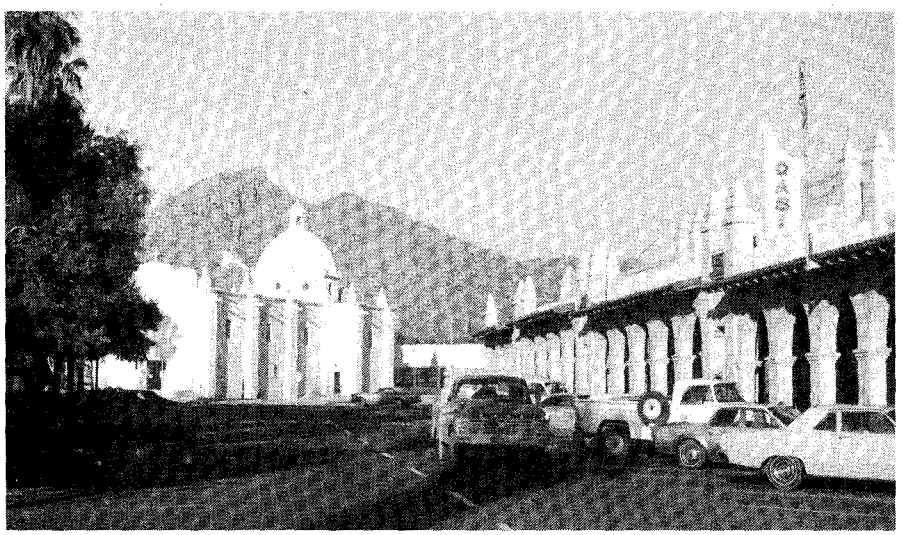
The California gold miners outfitted in Sonoita, Sonora, Mexico (above) after they found gold ore samples in the Cabeza de Prietas that tested two-thirds solid gold. The old Arizona mining town of Ajo (below) is a good place to outfit and depart to search for the mine.



their bedrolls and fight. Cordova was mauled over the head with a tomahawk and left for dead.

The foraying savages, believed to have been a band of Sand Papagos who were descendants of a prehistoric race of the Cabeza Prietas, carried away all camp equipment, including the saddle gear, horses, and pack mules. The savages thought they had left only three dead men behind.

But this is not the way it turned out.

Pablo Cordova regained consciousness shortly after sunup. After struggling from the bloody bedroll, he found that he could walk. And somehow the old soap maker straggled into Sonoita, more dead than alive, where he told about the attack. But he did not tell about the gold, saying that the party was only prospecting when attacked.

Pablo Cordova became a permanent cripple, almost totally blind. He was never able to return to the rough Cabeza Prietas. However, he always remembered vividly the directions which his partners had given him as the three trekked across the rugged country to the gold-laden mountain slope.

The soap maker eventually went to California to live with relatives. Becoming very old, he thought about the valuable mine back there in the Arizona Territory, northwest of Sonoita. He realized there was nothing in a physical way he could do about the mine, knowing he'd never be able to return. Then a thought struck him.

With his mind fully made up about what to do, he called in a man named C. O. Bustamente. And on September 27, 1878, the old soap maker dictated to Bustamente the strangest will ever known in the history of prospecting and mining. It turned out to be a bonafide waybill to the gold mine in the rugged mountains north of El Camino del Diablo, in the Arizona country.

Bustamente took Cordova's dictation in shorthand, at the former Sonoita resident's request, just as a precaution against the contents becoming known to improper persons.

Cordova's will favored his sister, who died in 1901. He had died eight years earlier, at the age of 84. His sister never searched for the mine. Pablo Cordova requested whoever recovered the gold "help" his daughter.

Words of the fantastic last will and testament were vividly clear, unquestionably simple to follow. No one has denied this since the legal sheet became known. However, the few who have been courageous enough to defy the horrible Cabeza Prietas in search of the lost gold say the old soap maker might have been confused somewhat in his directions because of the severe mauling the marauding Indians gave him that night when they killed his two partners. Such statements seem to have always been offered after unsuccessful attempts to find the gold-strewn mountain slope.

Pablo Cordova commenced his waybill with instructions to start the search at Quitobaquito and then follow the old road leading to Tinajas Altas. From there, travel to the end of the Pinto Mountains.

He said after reaching the Pinto Mountains, continue to Cabeza Mountain, where a well of water would be found. (Probably Tule Well).

Cordova further dictated, saying that after leaving Quitobaquito, continue to follow a dim trail until reaching a point where the trail forked for the first time. One trail would lead to Tinajas Altas and the other to Mohawk or the Gila River. Both are in the same general direction.

By standing at the trail forks and looking toward the north, he said, three mountain peaks were outstanding. (The peaks are noted on the Geological Survey map). Then Cordova dictated: "...the middle one is the mine on the opposite side of it."

He also said that in an arroyo near the forks of the trail would be found a large flat rock. And on top of this table-like rock would be "crow bars pointing to the peaks of said mine."

Then Pablo Cordova added "We were killed at the foot of said peaks of said mine. The little peaks cannot be seen from no other place but from the fork of the old road leading from Quitobaquito to Tinajas Altas. On the other side of the middle fork there is water and there is where the gold is."

(Continued on page 62)

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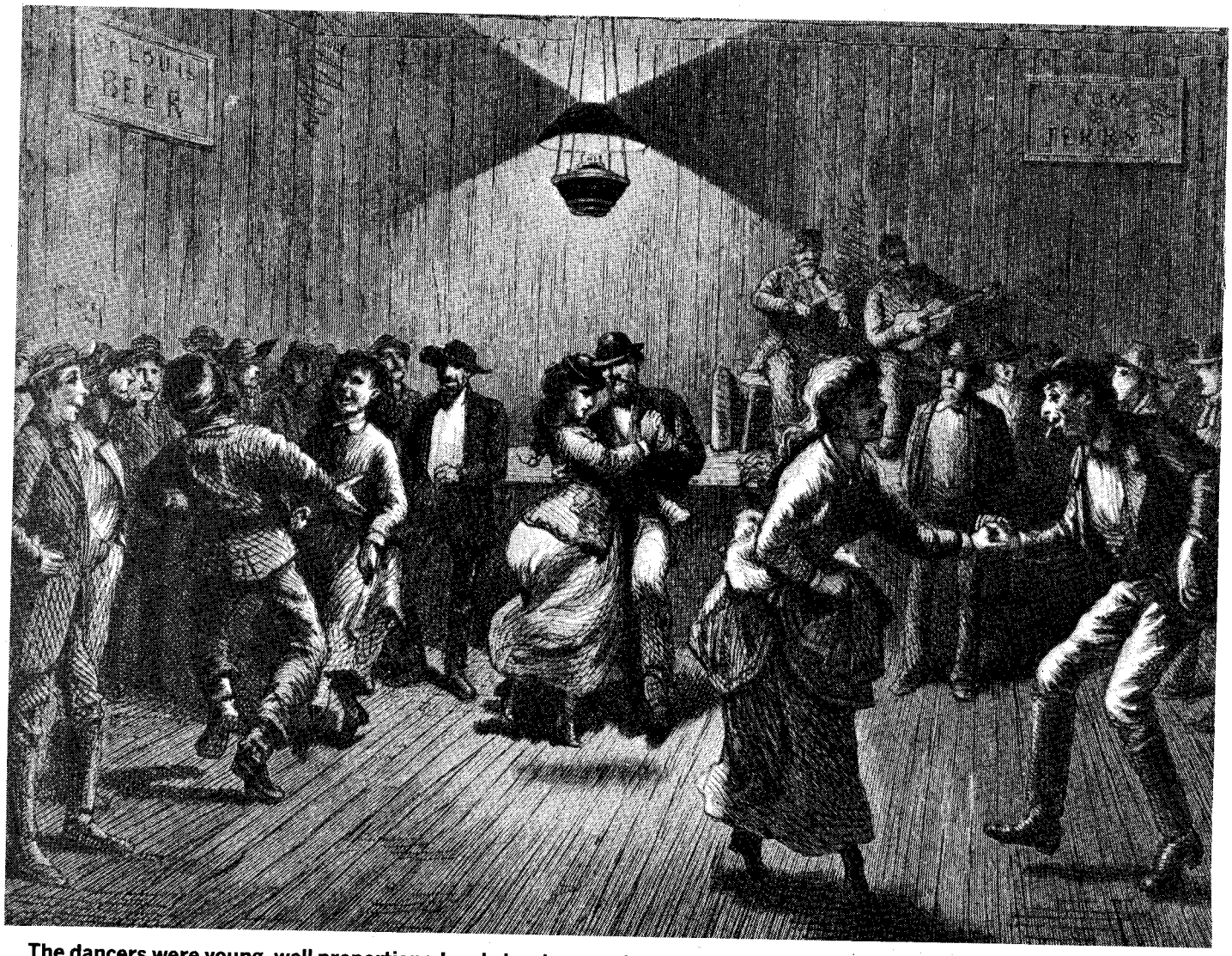

The dancers were young, well proportioned and vivacious, and that is what counted with the rough, lonesome miners.

THE AGONY OF

Mount Silverheels, in South Park, Colorado.

by Charles A. Hochmuth

ONE CAN READILY understand why a dance hall girl in the mining camps of the Old West had two strikes on her character right off the bat, and Silver Heels was no exception to that generalization. There is little doubt that in her exciting life, any opinion of morally fastidious folks was for the birds as far as she was concerned. She was young, a good-looker, well proportioned, vivacious, an excellent dancer and had sex appeal. And that was what counted with the rough, lonesome miners.

She did become an exception, nonetheless, when unforeseen events interrupted her ambiguous "career" and she came to be known to all as the "Angel of Mercy of South Park."

The girl called Silver Heels found her way into the rich mining district, which is in almost the exact center of Colorado, about the same time the town of Alma was founded there. It might even have been a year or two before that when new gold mines were opened up, and silver was discovered in the area in 1870.

For reasons of their own, dance hall girls all over the world

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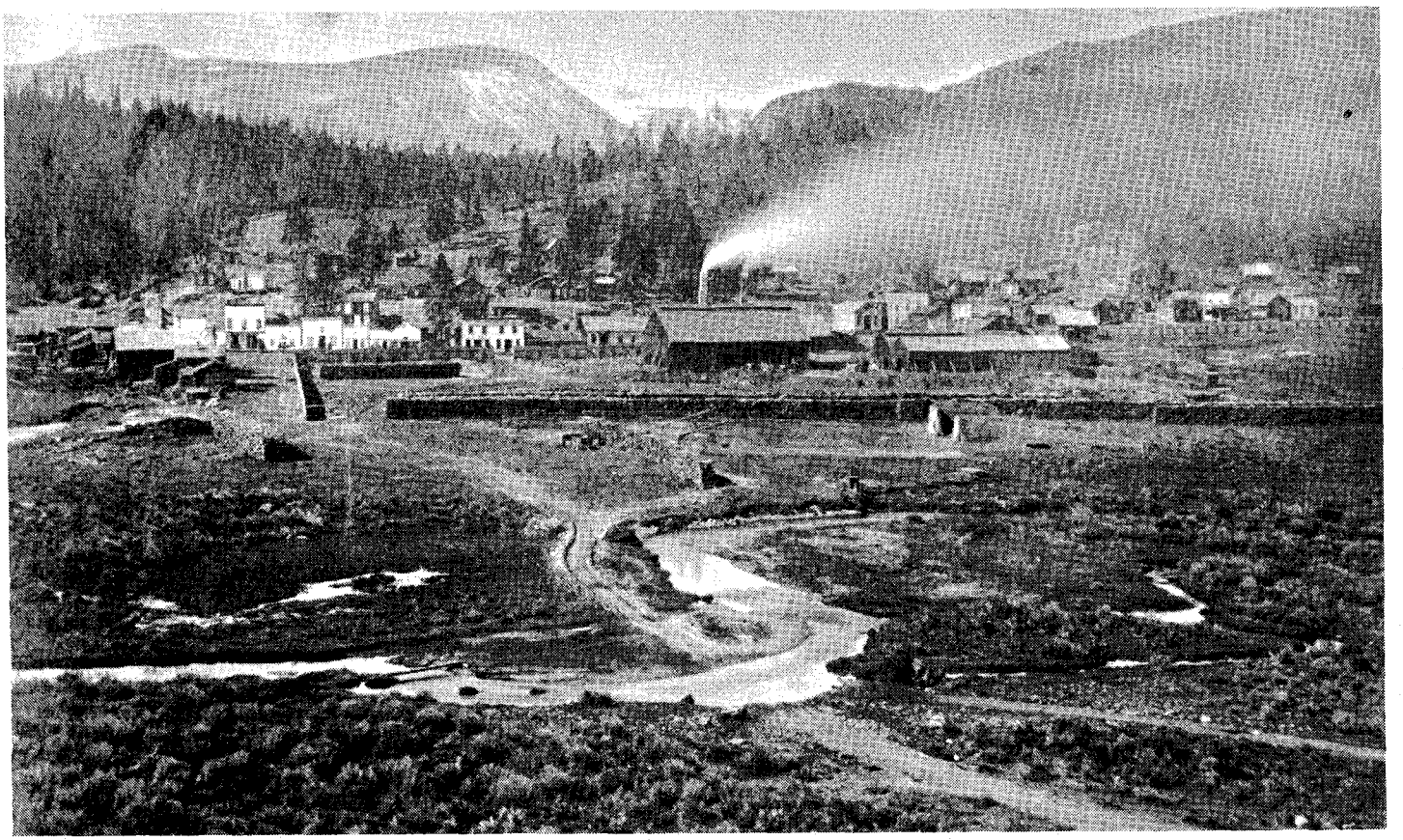
Was this appealing girl the daughter of a proud southern family? Had she fled from a restrictive eastern mansion? Everyone wondered about the pretty, talented saloon dancer until... one day...

Photos: Denver Pub. Library, Western Coll.



Alma, Colorado (abt. 1870) was situated in a rich mining district, in almost the exact center of the state.

SILVER HEELS

and through the years have usually kept their identities and their past history to themselves. Silver Heels was typical in that respect and no one knew anything about her. Bill Buck, owner of the establishment where she worked, might have been a possible exception.

Some of the more imaginative ones believed she was the daughter of a Southern family that was ruined by the Civil War and had come to the mining camps with the hope of helping out the old folks at home. Another version of her presence, less colorful but more plausible, was that she was a Moravian emigrant girl who had come west from Pennsylvania to take care of a widow and her two children, and who, while in Denver, became stage struck and took dancing lessons.

Like many another girl with the same aspirations, she ended up in a dance hall. Since her time, various writers have come up with other theories of her origin but none of them have ever been proved.

Being a talented dancer with every indication of having been trained in the art, she often gave solo performances in interpretative and classical dancing. After each, her enthusiastic audience would shout its approval, shower her with money or toss a gold "poke" out onto the floor and clamor for more. She was also familiar with all the popular steps of the time, including those that passed for dancing with her clumsy partners.

Silver Heels bound her dark hair with a silver fillet and always wore a mask when she appeared in public. Her reason for donning it could have been out of modesty, or for a disguise, but inasmuch as it concealed only partly the attractiveness beneath it, chances are that it was for nothing more than artful allurement.

On her first day in Buck's dance hall he auctioned off each dance with her and the bidding was high for the privilege of being her partner. From the very first she was the most popular girl in the joint and unlike most of the other girls who faded out sooner or later after making their debut, she remained the top favorite of the customers.

Whatever name the new dancer went under when she came to the district was soon forgotten when she became Silver Heels to the habitues of the dance hall. Shortly after her arrival one of her adept young admirers rigged up a pair of silver heels for her dancing slippers. It was from these embellishments that she gained the sobriquet by which she *(Continued on page 47)*

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The Sad Saga of Big Anne

When Madam Effie Fisher was violently snatched from the world of the living most people did not doubt her executioner was her ever-lovin' boyfriend, Goldie Filson; when the woman hit the roof because of his philandering, she'd told her friends: ". . . let him play elusive as an eel . . . I'll cut his electricity off . . ."

by Sam Henderson

"LAND!" THE GRISLY-FACED plainsman shouted. "FREE LAND!"

"What?" a raw boned farmer reacted. "Where?"

"Free land! In Oklahoma! Thar 'n' waitin' fer all who might want 'er . . ."

Yes! At long last it was happening! President Benjamin Harrison was opening the unassigned lands of the Indian Territory for homestead.

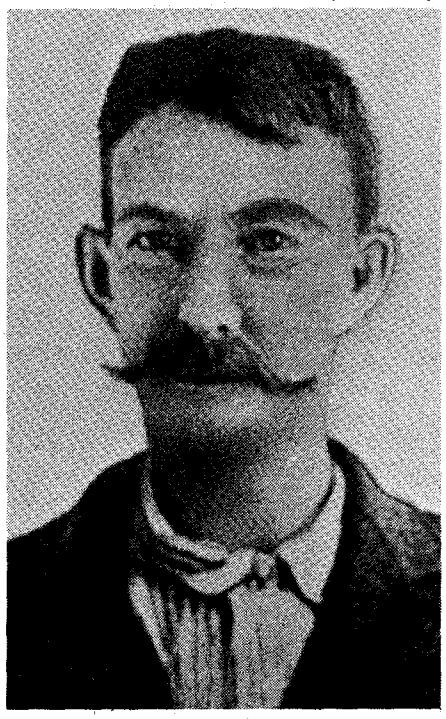
April 22, 1889 dawned to find a motley throng collecting on the border separating Kansas from the Cherokee outlet. All the restless elements of the North American continent—and some not so restless—were represented.

There were fugitives, promoters, pimps, shills, gamblers, lawyers, doctors, thieves and thugs—one and all ready and anxious to participate in a race for free land.

Cowboys, hundreds of them from throughout the West, were there astride their freshly broken broncos. Meek little ladies, striking a strange contrast, sat perched high atop carriages, desperately clinging to their reins and vainly trying to hold their teams in the traces. Pint sized jockeys from the Kentucky blue grass, awaiting the signal for high noon, held back their throughbred racing ponies. Covered wagons festooned with boomer slogans . . . "Oklahoma Or Bust!" "Strike Along The Cimmarron!" "No Turning Back!" . . . were there in force. Never before had mankind contrived or witnessed a race such as that which was about to follow.

Within a matter of hours the country that lay beyond them, now empty except for a few solitary Indian riders, would be settled and civilized. Towns, large and small and at chosen sites, would soon be breaking through the sunburnt, red clay soil. Bartlesville, Ardmore, Enid, Tulsa, Pawhuska, and Sapulpa—all these would see business houses popping like mushrooms from nowhere and offering "for sale at bargain prices" boots and suits, drugs and food stuffs, tools and hardware supplies.

Photo: Univ. of Okla. Library.



Bust portrait of Ed O'Kelley, the 'lucky' man 'privileged' to cut down Bob Ford.

Largest and most highly destined of all these would of course be Oklahoma City. Jesse Chisholm, the trail blazer who nearly thirty years before had chosen the site for Wichita, Kansas, had provided the location. He had long before established a trading post on the banks of the North Canadian. This place, set amid cottonwoods before a giant spring that fed crystal clear water to the river, became a rendezvous for plainsmen. The surrounding area, quite logically, was chosen as the site for the new civilization's largest city.

(The fact that Chisholm, a Scotch-Cherokee Indian trader, founded the location for Oklahoma City is today practically forgotten. He is remembered as the father of Wichita, Kansas. When the Civil War erupted in 1861 he was living and trading among the Wichita Indians in Oklahoma. "His people" had not followed their red neighbors into the Confederacy and thus found hostility on their native soil. Chisholm had led them into Kansas to the point where the Little Arkansas river meets its bigger brother and there established a trading post. The town called Wichita sprang up around it. Later he returned to the Indian nations and built a post on the site of the future location of Oklahoma City.)

From the rise of the very first tents Oklahoma City had its First Street, an area wilder and woolier than comparable sections in Dodge City, Tombstone, Abilene, and Deadwood in their wildest heyday. This, a block fronting the depot and today known as Santa Fe Avenue, provided the eastern boundary of the first sin district. Here, surrounded by canvas roofs and extending one solid block west to Broadway between Grand and California Avenues, sprang up false fronted saloons, sin dens, gambling banks and whorehouses. Outlaws from Texas—John Burgess, Kid Bannister, Goldie Filson and Big George Garrison were examples—threw up tents there, began drawing beer and operating gaming tables. Big Anne Winn, a madam who came rip-roaring in from Creede, opened the first brothel, and took immediate command of a certain lonely segment of the community.

On settlement night they all together pitched a rip-roaring drunk so as to let their neighbors know what they felt was in store for Oklahoma City.

"Whoopee!" Big Anne shouted, tossing a beer bottle into the air and swaying drunkenly astride her pony. "This heah is Sooner City! Where sooner'll come hell than heaven!"

"Yes-sirree!" John Burgiss agreed. "This heah is whar Satan is a gonna live—on this heah half acre."

And by such the community became known—as Satan's Half Acre.

Just as fittingly named was the area's spur—the branch of Broadway extending

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Photo: Univ. of Okla. Library.

Bill Tilghman was called to Oklahoma City for a chore the citizens earnestly desired—to boot the roughies!

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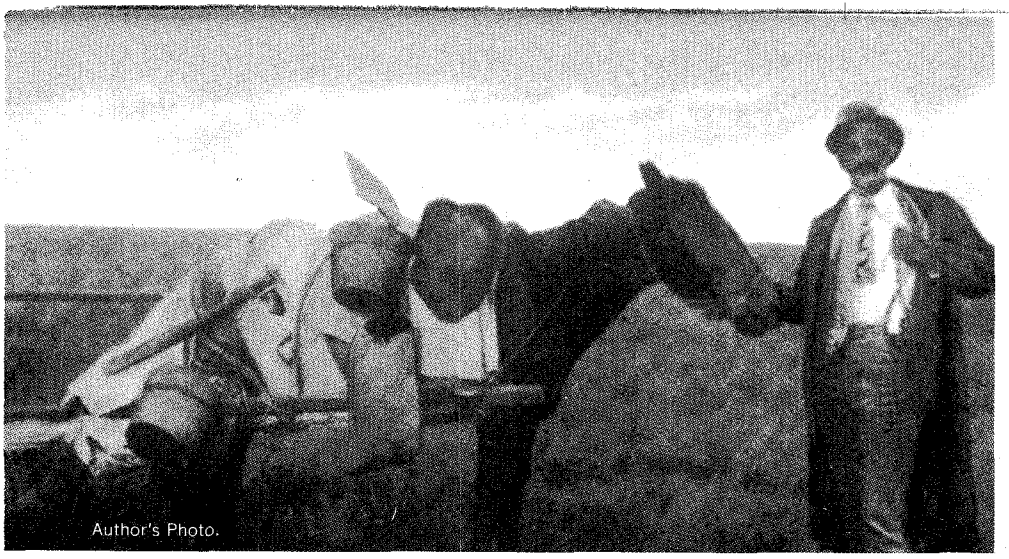

This gallant fellow is supposed to be an early-day Oklahoman.

north from Grand Avenue to Main Street. Called "Battle Row," it was composed from its very beginning exactly as it remains almost until today—a stretch of land dedicated to dancing, drinking, and catering to man's desire for fun, or what is euphemistically called "having a good time."

The city, flagrantly defying law and order, opened its first government offices over one of these saloons. The location was convenient for the operators who were periodically required to pay a protection fee for the privilege of staying open.

Over these combined areas Big Anne Winn reigned supreme. A hefty blonde who tipped the scales at 210 pounds, she had opened the district's first brothel a few days after the run. Oklahoma City had had its scarlet ladies from the rise of the very first tents and they all found employment awaiting at her place. Those who wished to establish rival houses had to seek her permission first—and then later pay the city officials a license fee. That way she could rest assurred of having no serious competition.

The reader, after considering Big Anne's background, will probably not find her genius for organization so surprising. She had spent almost her entire life in an atmosphere of vice and crime. Creede, Colorado, the town she called home, had, during her childhood, been the wildest town in the West. Silver rich, it had lain sprawled out just beyond the mouth of what was known as King Solomon's Mines in a motley array of sin dens, gambling halls, and honky-tonks. Soapy Smith, its two-gun boss, provided the only law. Bad men and gunfighters—Bob Ford, Dick Liddil, Ed O'Kelley, each of whom played a role in the Jesse James legend, were examples, every day strolled the board walks.

Big Anne, before leaving Creede, had witnessed the beginning of one of the most bitter, and yet most overlooked, of frontier feuds. Bob Ford, even before he rode into Creede, was part of the lore and legend of the Old West. Already the ballad depicting him "a dirty little coward" was being sung in saloons and around camp fires throughout the plains country.

In reality he was no coward, and proved it almost immediately after his arrival in Creede. He took one look at the many honky-tonks and sin dens under Smith's proprietorship, summed up in his mind what they were taking in, and decided some of this should be his. He strolled into the nearest saloon, ordered his whiskey straight, and studied the set-up. Then he began questioning the bartender.

"How'd another saloon go in this town," he wondered aloud. "A place with better drinks, cozier rooms, prettier women, and honestly run gaming tables. Honestly run—not crookedly—not like yours."

The bartender dropped the glass he'd been polishing. It fell with a crash to the floor. He stared in disbelief at the inquisitive stranger.

"Mister," he said, "them ain't my tables. They're Soapy Smith's. He's boss of this town and they ain't nobody gonna open a saloon here 'bouts 'thout his say-so. It's been tried before and those who tried are right now restin' on Boot Hill."

"Well," the stranger said, tossing a silver dollar onto the bar, "it's gonna be tried again. And I ain't needin' no rest. Either on Boot Hill or elsewhere." He whirled and started for the door. Half way across the floor he paused and turned, "Oh yes," he said, "the name is Bob Ford. I'm the man who killed Jesse James."

Ford did open a saloon in Creede—and in a short time was doing a turn-away business. He, just as he promised, provided prettier girls, cozier rooms, and ran the gaming tables honestly. He satisfied everybody in town—excepting Soapy Smith.

The boss called several of his top guns into his office. "Give that bastard this," he said, throwing a bag of silver out onto his desk. "And tell 'im to get out before nightfall. That's ten times more than his place is worth. Tell 'im to take it and get out!"

Ford accepted the bag, loosed its string, and emptied the contents onto the floor of his saloon. "Tell Smith to go to hell," he ordered the gunmen. "My place is not up for sale."

During the months that followed Smith waged relentless war against his rival. First he tried threats—all of which Ford ignored. Then he paid gunmen to shoot up Bob's saloon. These were one and all chased from the premises. Finally he paid arsonists to set fire to the building. This ruse proved more effective. "Little Robert's" saloon burned entirely to the ground.

But even then Ford would not admit defeat. He hastily retrieved whatever remained of his equipment from the flames, moved it down the street, and set it up underneath a big tent. Within twenty-four hours Ford's saloon was once again in operation, still offering better whiskey, prettier girls, honest games—everything but cozier rooms.

It was not until three years after Big Anne vacated Creede City that Smith got rid of his rival. In 1892 he paid one of his policemen, Edward O'Kelley, to do Ford in. O'Kelley, armed with a shotgun, entered the tent by a side entrance, caught Bob by surprise, and gunned him down. (O'Kelley was convicted of murder in the second degree and sentenced to twenty years imprisonment. But he, being the man who had ridded the earth of "that dirty little coward" so infamous in lore and legend, was pardoned after only two years. As we shall see, he played a part in later day Oklahoma City history.)

Big Anne Winn, even during her childhood, had become well schooled in vice and crime. She'd learned from first hand observation of Soapy Smith's methods just what made possible an underworld's sordid existence. All this she would use to great advantage during the later years in Oklahoma City.

An explosive mixture such as that which settled Oklahoma could not be expected to result in anything else but a big bang. It is thus not surprising that violence erupted there during the first few days of its existence.

Rip Roaring Bill, a nuisance who had got himself unofficially hanged, had nevertheless impressed upon the citizens the need for competent law enforcement. In desperation they appealed to the United States Marshal's office. Could he send them a lawman? Someone like Bill Tilghman or Chris Madsen—tough enough to protect their lives, wives, children, and property?

Within hours the marshal wired back his reply. He expressed complete understanding and promised to send them a deputy.

The committeemen, expecting a husky six-footer with two six guns around his waist, gathered at the Santa Fe depot to await their new marshal. For three long hours they waited—and then heard a

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whistle wailing in the distance. In a few minutes the afternoon train would be pulling into the station.

Finally it came chugging to a halt. The passenger door swung open and out stepped Oklahoma City's first peace officer. Who was it? Bill Tilghman? Chris Madsen? Heck Thomas? Buck Garrett? No!

There had to be a mistake! There standing on the platform was nothing else but—a female! A female with long raven black hair, a delicately featured face, and a voluptuous figure. She wore a cotton blouse and tight fitting riding pants. A tin star was pinned to the high rise of her bosom.

"We didn't expect..."

"A woman? Well, boys, I'm gonna provide you better law enforcement than you could expect even from the toughest of men. Just you wait 'n' see. The name is Ada Curnette 'n' I'm a gonna bring order to your city."

The committee couldn't believe it. They walked from the station more frustrated than ever. They were all scratching their heads and wondering at the behavior of the United States Marshal's office. Several men suggested the head man there might be going insane. This was a brutal town in a brutal land. It would take a man—a real man like Bill Tilghman—to tame it. No woman could possibly do it!

For almost any woman the feat of cleaning up the wildest town in the West would indeed have been impossible. But for Ada Curnette it was something else. She proved as much—and let the unsavory element know what could be expected of her—within a few days of her appointment. Late one night she, alone, entered the Turf Saloon on Battle Row and arrested nineteen hardened criminals for holding false land leases. With a scatter gun she marched them from the establishment and up the street to the jail.

On another occasion she was called to halt a gun fight about to get under way on West Second Street. Armed with a Winchester, she climbed to the top of a building and fired several shots down into the street below. Both men looked up—and immediately forgot their anger. There "wuz some kinda damn fool woman up thar showin' off."

Ada ordered them both off the street. They now joined forces and turned their combined wrath on the officer.

"You go to hell!" one shouted.

"Yeah. What you think you..."

Bang! Bang! Ada's rifle bucked twice in her tiny fists, taking a hat off each of the men's heads.

"Next shots will be for your hearts," she warned. "I'm countin' three and then..."

Ada didn't get another word said. Before the threat could be completed the men had vanished into the dark.

Ada Curnette had thus provided Oklahoma City its first taste of law enforcement.

The Turf Saloon was the scene of a memorable 1894 Easter Sunday gunfight. Hank Cunningham, an ex-deputy sheriff and seasoned cowboy, had spent most of the day before trying to prod a former friend named Bill McClure into a battle. McClure had refused to post his bond on a perjury charge and now he wanted to "even the score." Time and again McClure had ignored his threats and abuse. Always, when Cunningham entered a saloon where he was drinking, he moved toward the back door.

Finally, at four o'clock on a Sunday morning, Hank decided to force his man into a fight. He armed himself with a Winchester and entered the Turf, where McClure was drinking.

"Now, damn you," he shouted, pointing the rifle directly at his former friend's face, "fight! Go for your guns!"

McClure, instantly cold sober, dropped to cover behind the bar. Bang! Cunningham's rifle exploded, shattering the mirror behind and dropping bits of glass down onto his shoulders. A split second later he came erect, his six-guns out and roaring. He fired five times, and each shot caught Hank square center in the chest. The former sheriff was dead before he hit the floor.

Oklahoma City Police Chief Milt Jones had in his jail during June of 1895 representatives from two of the West's most notorious outlaw brotherhoods, Bob and Bill Christian. The men were cousins of another Bob—Bad Bob Christian—the terror of the Seminole Nation. The Christian boys were held there awaiting trial for killing a deputy sheriff. In a nearby cell Jim and Vic Casey, recently convicted of cold bloodedly murdering a neighboring farmer, were awaiting a hangman's noose. These each and everyone had but one hope—escape.

The Christians were thus somewhat enhanced the day they received at their cell door a God-sent angel. Certain church societies, hoping to relieve the

(Continued on page 50)

Author's Photo.

This lady was indeed a pioneer; she stood bravely in her shelter when her town—Guthrie—was one day old.

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Dr. Rose Burcham and

by Joe Kennelley

The miners flocked to the Yellow Aster Saloon in tribute to Dr. Rose after the Doc sat up all the preceding night with ailing Mexican Nell, who worked for the opposition

Photo: Arthur H. Clark, Publishers

She delivered babies to grubstake her husband's mining venture.

Rose was part owner of the

The Mormon town of San Bernardino, sixty miles east of Los Angeles, was only 40 years old when pretty Rose Burcham descended on the quiet community. Back east she had heard from travelers of the wonderful climate, the many opportunities to grow rich, the "great land of milk and honey" of Southern California. "Why, Rose," a friend told her, "you could make a fortune out there, you being a doctor and all—"

Rose *was* a doctor, and a darn good one at that. As Miss La Monte—her name before she met and married Charles Burcham—she was well known in several towns in Wisconsin as "that young lady doctor who knows everything about

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The YELLOW ASTER

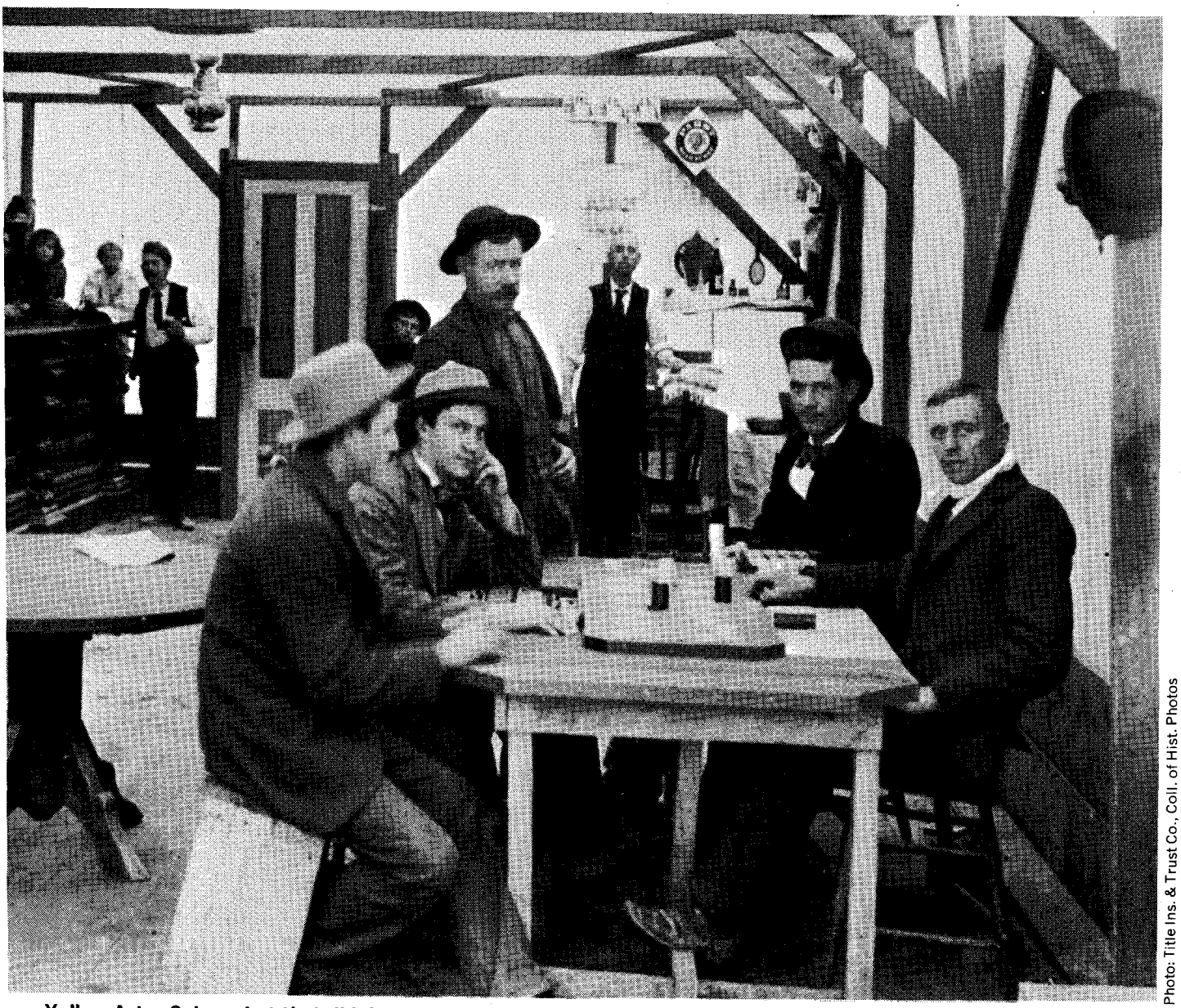

Photo: Title Ins. & Trust Co., Coll. of Hist. Photos

Yellow Aster Saloon, but that didn't stop her from doctoring the singer who was her competitor's big attraction.

babies. And their mothers, too."

But when she arrived in San Bernardino she immediately became known as "Doc" Burcham. She had married Burcham back east, and the two decided that their fortunes lay westward.

"Rose," Charlie would say, "let's go to California and be rich!"

He was half joking, but beneath the jest there lay hope and a secret dream of growing fabulously wealthy, living the leisurely life of a millionaire, like so many he had read about in books. And Rose would reply, "I hear living in California can be mighty difficult, Charlie, so don't get your hopes too high. Let's just try it awhile and see what happens. If things go badly, we can always return and mark the whole thing up to 'high adventure' in our lives!"

Finally the day came when the two left Wisconsin. They pulled into San Bernardino in 1892. With their savings, Rose and Charlie immediately opened a meat-market and bought some cattle. He leased some land from a Mexican family south of the town for his cattle to graze on. Rose opened a small office near the center of town and within three days had treated six female patients. On her fourth day of practice she delivered two Mormon babies. Looked like business was going to be brisk in this town!

To be sure, it wasn't long before Rose was the most popular lady, and easily the most popular doctor, in San Bernardino. At least she was with women who had longed for a "lady doctor" to treat their ailments, to console them and offer them the understanding and sympathy that their menfolk sometimes failed to give.

After a year, "Doc" Rose had built her practice into a sizeable and profitable—one. Charlie's meat-market business, though, fared badly. A drought hurt his cattle business that first year, too. Charlie was ready to return to Wisconsin.

(Continued on page 58)

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The Town That

On that moonlit night in October, 1880, Curly Bill Brocius, top tough of the Tombstone hills, tied up at an Allen Street Hitchrack, sternly cautioning his fellow-felons: NO SHOOTING TONIGHT... yet within hours Marshal Fred White kicked the bucket

Photos: Courtesy Ariz. Pioneers Hist. Society, Tucson

Famed Eddie Foy when he appeared at the Bird Cage Theater. Wig he wore gives him modern look.

by Ivan Clyde Lake

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY were never far apart in the pistol-packin' Arizona town that was Tombstone of the 1800s. The Bird Cage theater, recorded in history as a "... variety house, saloon, gambling hall, and brothel," was the shiny fun-spot of the honky-tonk mining camp.

But the house of comedy stood on a lot where tragic gunplay had left a shadow that could never be completely erased, and that adobe building still stands there, near the corner of Allen and Sixth streets, a repaired relict of shattered yesterdays.

The rowdydow that challenged its mud walls has long since ended; anyone prowling around in the name of historical research will now find the old theater as quiet as a mouse that has nibbled on a tranquillizer.

The final curtain was rolled down longer ago than a half-century: behind it the hidden stage that once quaked under dancing feet is untroubled in its retirement, but it is not empty. A museum piece stands on it, giving it a symbolically sombre look: a gold-trimmed, silver-streaked hearse that made many a trip to the stony promontory north of town on which Boothill graveyard yawned wide and often.

The hearse belonged to A. J. Ritter, Tombstone's popular undertaker who had initially used a clattering lumber wagon in which to give a goodby ride to victims of trigger-happy deep-sleep specialists. When Ritter bought the ornate death-wagon the Tombstone *Epitaph* remarked, "Anyone 'kicking the bucket' can now have a ride out of town in style."

On a moonlit night in October, 1880, Curly Bill Brocius, top tough of the Tombstone hills, followed by his fellow-felons, galloped into the mesa-town and tied up at an Allen Street hitchrack.

"No shootin' tonight, boys," Bill ordered. "I don't aim to roil up Marshal White."

"You scairt of him, Bill?"

"Him? Hell, no!"

It was widely known that when Curly Bill and his followers set their hearts on taking a town apart they could do so in a manner cyclonic. But there would be no splinterings tonight, Bill insisted.

As the heavy-booted outlaws tramped up and down on the plankwalks of Allen Street, they now and again interrupted themselves to noise their way into conveniently located barrooms. They were apparently eager to unload their pockets of cumbersome cartwheels that had burdened them since their most recent sale of rustled cattle.

At last Curly Bill detached himself from his bibulous pack and lumbered off alone into the night. As soon as his restraining hand was removed, his followers sought the middle of the street and began to totter adown it, two-abreast. An hombre in the lead abruptly stopped and pointed a finger skyward.

"I betcha b'hell," he boomed out, "I c'n hit that 'ere moon, up there."

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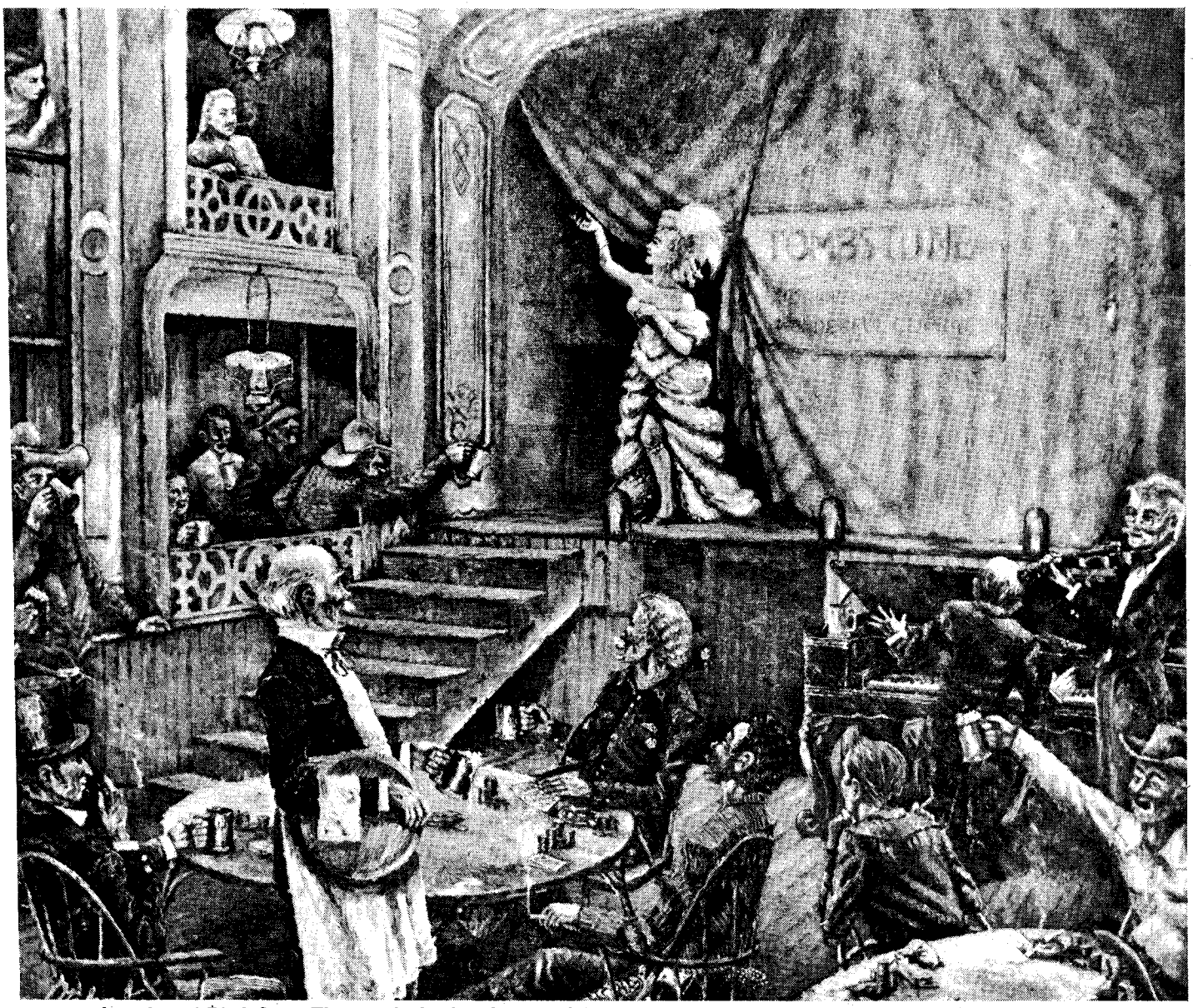
Wept and Laughed



Interior of Bird Cage Theatre in its heyday; to right of visible steps was down stairway to dressing rooms.

"Betcha cain't," the others boomed back.

The braggart squinted up at the bright-white moon rolling silently across the heavens. Then he fumbled for his gun, finally removed it from its holster, and shakily fired into outer space in an approximate, lunar direction. The uncaring moon, apparently untouched, continued on its celestial course. The shootin'-man shook his head in bafflement.

"Hell," he said finally, "mebbe I didn't hit it but I sure got it on the run."

Marshal Fred White was walking his beat down Sixth Street to Allen when he heard the celestial explosion. Some hoot-owl, he reckoned, had shot a hole clean through the ordinance that forbade toting and triggering firearms inside village limits. To shorten his way to Allen Street, the marshal angled across a vacant lot—later the site on which the Bird Cage theater was built—and had nearly reached the street when a vaporous figure floated past him.

"Stop right there!" Marshal White cried. "Who are you?"

The figure paused, and solidified into a man. Marshal White ambled over cautiously and made identification.

"Oh, it's you, Curly Bill," he said. "You know it's against the law to carry firearms in town without a permit—and it's a sure thing you don't have one."

"I know your law," Bill said. "But I ain't used my gun since I been in town and I don't figger on usin' it, neither."

"I heard a gunshot," the marshal said.

"So did I," Bill said, "but 'twa'n't mine, I swear!"

"Better hand over your gun, Bill."

"Sure, marshal. Why not? Just so's you don't disremember to hand it back, come time for me to light a shuck."

In a leisurely way Bill reached for his gun and was lifting it from its holster when, at that moment, someone suddenly emerged from the shadows, leaped at Bill from the rear, and pinned back his arms.

The jolt jarred Bill—and his gun exploded. Marshal White

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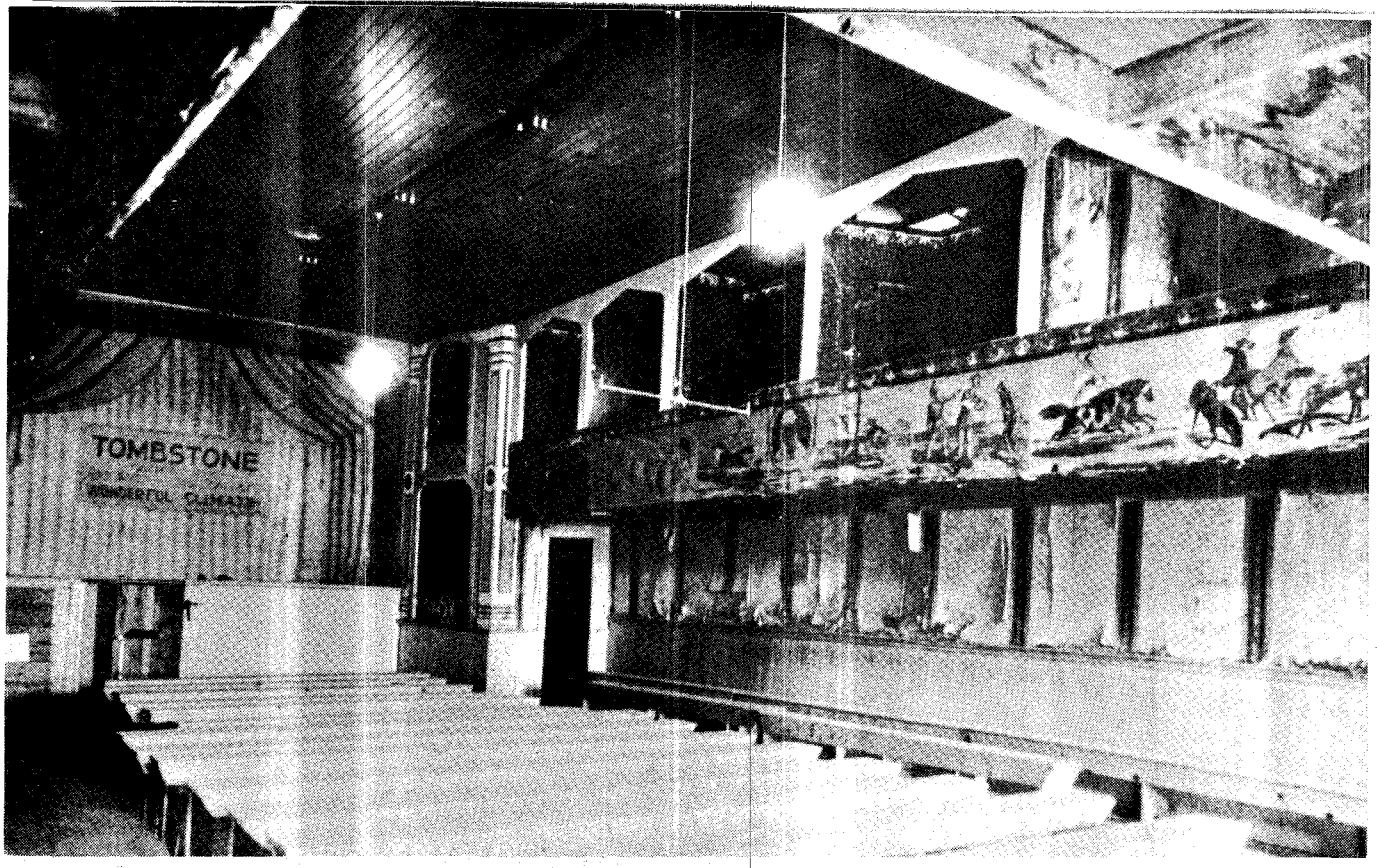

After theater became sports center, Kerosene lights were replaced by gas, and benches replaced chairs.

was "...shot through the groin, the ball nearly passing through," the *Epitaph* reported.

The man who had interfered presumably thought that Curly Bill was about to shoot the marshal. At least, that is a kind way of putting it. He was Virgil Earp, brother of Wyatt and Morgan Earp. Anyhow, it was thus that the Earp triumvirate introduced its heavy-handed rule over Tombstone.

Now, when it seemed safe for him to do so, the redoubtable Wyatt showed up and took over. He snapped out an order to somebody in the fast-growing crowd to fetch a sawbones; to somebody else he snapped out an order to fetch his brother Morgan. Soon thereafter the Earp trio rounded up all the two-legged longhorns thereabout wearing a Texas brand—which meant Curly Bill and his human herd—and corraled them in the town's *calabozo.*

On the following morning all the prisoners were released except Curly Bill, who got three-four free meals on the town. Marshal White died at dawn, but with his last breath he exonerated Curly Bill.

"It was an accident," he whispered.

The lot on which Marshal White was fatally shot was commonly known as the Gilded Age Mining Claim. After two or three shady real estate deals, it came into the possession of Henry Fry, who built a small house on a part of it. Late in 1880 Fry sold his property to William J. Hutchinson. Billy Hutchinson and his actress-wife then drew plans for the erection there of the Bird Cage Theater. The building was completed in the following year.

The showhouse was a story and a half high, with a depth of 120 feet and a frontage of 30 feet. Triple entrances opened on Allen Street and above each of its doors was a fan window set in under a red brick Romanesque arch.

In the foyer of the Bird Cage Theater stood a five-foot mahogany bar, and busy it was, 24 of every day's 24 hours, with three shifts of bartenders. It had a mirrored backbar that held rows of artfully-shaped bottles containing spirituous contents which were guaranteed to educe picturesque results when generously imbibed.

At the end of the bar, near a partition that separated the foyer from the auditorium, was a dumb waiter, manually operated by pulley and tackle. Bottles of joy juice were put into a basket and then elevated some 15 feet to a bridge or balcony that spanned the foyer overhead. A flight of stairs led up to the balcony from where moneyed patrons could enter the boxes.

The architectural arrangement of these boxes, which had the appearance of suspended bird cages, gave name to the theater.

There were seven boxes on either side of the auditorium, and they were so graduated that the first box was level with the stage. Similarly graduated were the prices charged for the boxes. The *loge,* flush with the stage, cost $25 a night. Tradition has it that an oddball called Russian Bill rented a *loge* every night for two solid years.

Performances, never noted on the printed programs, were commonly enacted in the boxes, which could be conveniently curtained against prurient eyes. Patrons were served by so-called percentage girls who received a 10 to 20 percent cut on all liquor sold. They were highly visible as they hurried, baskets of bottles in the crook of their arms, from the dumb waiter to the boxes in which their patrons waited.

The blonde Junos of alabastrine shoulders and legs dressed themselves in brief, gaudily bespangled skirts and flimsy blouses cut deeply *decollete.* They fluttered their skirts as they flitted about and thereby gave generous though evanescent view of mysterious charms; each smothered her patron with crimson caresses, and her lips were usually chockful of germs eager to be transferred.

A percentage girl, who could have been recruited from a nearby *bagnio* was professionally trained to extract money-moneymoney from her victim. She was happiest when she got his last farthing—which pinpointed the living doll as a big success. And when the following morning arrived—along with the man's sobriety—he could figure that he had lost a half-hundred or so dollars on his trip through the female jungle.

Respectable folk of Tombstone, of whom there were many, "shunned the Bird Cage theater," according to report. The variety house "...early acquired the reputation of a temple dedicated to the lusty unattached males. Oddly enough, the town's officials, notables, and local desperadoes could generally be found there when inquiry failed to locate them elsewhere."

It was probably the only time when these headline-catchers, sitting in their elevated boxes, could be called lofty individuals.

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Photos: Courtesy Ariz. Pioneers Hist. Society, Tucson.

Photo shows old building after restoration; it is kept up as a museum, and is powerfully attractive to tourists.

Frequently Wyatt Earp and his friends were boxed up on one side of the auditorium while across from them sat Sheriff Johnny Behan and his cohorts. Earp and Behan were cat-and-dog foes, and it was hiss and snarl, claw and chew, figuratively, whenever the twain did meet. They advertised their common animosity in the Bird Cage; when one faction, for instance, loudly applauded a performance, the other was stone-silent.

It was quite possible that if the lawmen had been less absorbed in their own personal, political and other petty quarrels they could have found many a lead, right there in the theater, that would have put them on the sure trail of wanted men. It was a foregone conclusion that whenever a wanton waitress appeared there in new fineries, these exquisite "nothings" had been bought for her by some honeyfussin' outlaw who had recently held up a stagecoach and thereby netted enough to put him in the silk-buying set.

The lawmen and other sureshots who deemed themselves privileged swaggered into the auditorium with their hardware on. They ignored the notice posted by the management for all to read and heed: "Persons entering this house are required by October 13...Section 7, Revised Statutes of Arizona, to divest themselves of firearms or other weapons. Read this notice and deposit firearms in the case. Thank you."

The majority of patrons, the mostly honest common folk, paid two-bits for a folding chair and lugged it into the auditorium, taking up squatter's rights wherever space was available on the level ground floor. They never failed to deposit any lethal toy they had in a glass case in the *foyer*.

This shambles of a building is how Birdcage looked before restoration.

The auditorium was lighted by kerosene lamps, one over each box; a row of shielded footlights, kerosene-fed, flickered across the front of the stage. The proscenium toward which the common gaze was directed was 15 feet wide and 10 feet high; back of it the stage stretched to a playing depth of 15 feet. Dressing-rooms for the performers were located in a small basement under the stage; from there they climbed a stairway that took them to the stage via the orchestra pit.

Most popular of the giddy performances was the can-can or *chahut*: it brought the house down, almost literally. It was a wildly indecorous French dance in fast double time that imitated the Spanish *fandango*. Originally it had been a slow decorous dance but, one authority says, "...it developed suggestive movements which excluded it from high society." Another authority says that it "...was originally a dance imitating monkeys."

It was an uproarious clomping of human hoofs, and exciting, especially when

(Continued on page 63)

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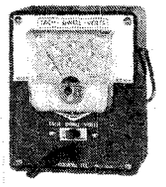

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THE MAIL POUCH

(Continued from page 6)

WOUNDED KNEE REACTION

I'm writing in regards to a pair of letters in "Mail Pouch" printed in the March issue of THE WEST.

I have to be very upset when I read such one-sided opinions of people in this day and age who still contend the necessity of the Indian wars felt by our government leaders of the time.

As in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, to name just two, the Indian wars were, in fact, wars of expansion. There were, and still are, very many greedy people in our young country. They were after land, had great influence with the politicians, and the systematic dispatch of all Indians and the wrangling of their land was in character.

I would first like to answer B.G. Chynoweth's question as to how troops sustained so many casualties after the Indians supposedly turned in their weapons.

The answer, simply and truthfully, is that those casualties came as a result of being shot by their own weapons! I'm not saying that no Indians inflicted any of these casualties. What I am saying is that when you have a circle of troops firing into the center of the circle you must be able to visualize some of these rounds carrying unimpeded through the circle into the ranks forming it.

In regards to the letter sent in by Ralph "Big Tree" Yarbrough, this "bleeding heart's" explanation of the above will also give answers to his so "factually" stated question.

Mr. Yarbrough calls this "skirmish" at Wounded Knee an accident, but I sincerely doubt it.

These 350 Hunkpapa and Minneconjou Sioux, of which 230 were women and children, after peacefully turning in their weapons, having their possessions ripped open and scattered to insure there were no weapons hidden away, and then being further humiliated by being physically searched, could in no way have any sufficient number of any sort of Winchester repeaters available to pose any threats.

Now, take into consideration that these troops surrounding the Indians had among them troops and commanders who 14 years earlier suffered defeat at the Little Big Horn by these same Sioux. This was indeed Custer's 7th. Take into mind the simple, earthy thoughts running through these soldier's heads.

This was to be the last confrontation between these warriors. The 7th lost its colors at the Big Horn, and by tradition the only way to get them back is by defeating the same army to which they were lost!

Thus, there must be itchy trigger fingers.

Mr. Yarbrough called Yellow Bird a "fanatic" and blamed him for setting off this "skirmish." It is to be that the one and only voice raised to protest these indignities is to be dubbed a "fanatic?"

To blame the shooting of women and children on the Indians and their own Winchester fire and not mention the four Hotchkiss guns on the hill firing almost a shell per second, shredding the area with flying shrapnel, is missing the whole truth!

There might be a strong tendancy, as Mr. Yarbrough states, to oversentimentalize the Indians, but the tendancy is not strong enough. As of this writing a newspaper reporter is in jail because of gaining access to many official documents and records that prove, beyond a doubt, our past governments' views towards the Indians and their lands, and of the many broken treaties—broken because the Indians had something the government wanted and took.

The reporter is in jail for not divulging his source of information, or in other words, for not naming the person or persons who made this information accessible to him.

In the northwest states, at this writing, the government is still trying to take millions of acres of land—land rightfully belonging to the Indians by treaty—away from them. They have sent the Indians checks of approximately $600 per Indian! That amount won't even buy a decent used car, but these Indians are expected to keep this check as payment for the loss of their lands!

To continue to bury our heads as these actions unfold is to forget our national heritage as Americans in this beautiful land. And this heritage includes our red brothers and sisters too!

A.K. KICHTY
Capistrano Beach, Calif.

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BROTHER VAN—GOD'S RUGGED MAN

(Continued from page 15)

ment and hardship they turned to more lucrative—and sometimes illegal—fields. This was vividly illustrated one day when Brother Van was on a stagecoach during a holdup.

Unhurriedly, the road agent frisked the passengers one by one, taking what valuables they had in the way of jewelry and cash. Then came the preacher's turn.

"You wouldn't rob a poor Methodist preacher, would you?" Brother Van asked softly.

To this the holdup man answered, "Put your hands down, brother. I'm a minister myself."

Brother Van usually dressed like a preacher and wore his clerical garments most of the time. Once, after a heavy rain, he was forced to change into civilian clothes. When he rode into Radersburg the town mistook him for a horse thief and they decided to hang him. With one end of the rope over a beam and the other ready to go around his neck, he pleaded for his life. But not until he sang, "Diamonds in the Rough," did the crowd recognize him as Brother Van.

Death brushed him often. His saddle stopped more than one bullet aimed at him. In 1877, he was preaching in the court house at Bannack. This was shortly after the Custer Massacre, and the Nez Pierce Indians were on the war path. They came down en masse on the little settlement, and the men and women fled into town with tales of Indian atrocities. The meeting was interrupted and the town was almost in a state of hysteria. When the dead were brought in Brother Van conducted a mass funeral with his revolver resting on the nearest casket. The men sat by the windows with loaded rifles.

After the service a scout came galloping into town. "The Indians are coming!" he yelled. Women and children were herded into the court house. Men flattened themselves behind barricades and looked over their rifle barrels at Indians not more than a mile away. It was certain now that it would take a miracle to save the town and Brother Van helped to bring about that miracle.

He and John Paindexter slipped through Chief Joseph's lines to bring word to General Howard. This proved to be one of the most gallant—and dangerous—rides in Montana history. Like two shadows they made their way through the darkest part of the night, slipping through the guards surrounding the town, and swam the river. The chief had all the trails leading out of town blocked, but Brother Van knew an old abandoned prospectors' trail that wormed around the mountain far above the timber line. The road was often blocked by boulders and fallen timber; a slip in the wrong place would have meant certain death on the rocks below. It was this trail they traversed to bring word to General Howard, whose cavalry rode to save the stricken town.

In many parts of Montana Christmas was unknown until Brother Van started organizing Christmas parties. People came for miles to these get-togethers. There were gifts and treats for all. Often Brother Van acted as Santa Claus. The historian, A.J. Smith, said, "He not only brought Christianity to these towns, but civilization also."

The day finally came when the Indian was forced to put away his rifle, settle on the reservation and smoke the pipe of peace. The great blizzard of '86 ended the reign of the cattle barons. The vast herds of buffalo had been killed off and their trails plowed under, the stagecoach was relegated to the museum, and great trains steamed across the plains.

Color petered out in the hills and the gold camps became ghost towns. The homesteader moved in and took up the free land. The farmer and rancher had come to stay. Towns sprang up along the railway. Montana became a state in 1889.

A new day had dawned, and Brother Van was the man who rose to meet the need. He was elected District Superintendent for the Methodist Church for the Northern part of Montana. He turned his horse out to pasture and rode the train from town to town or herded his model T Ford over the prairie trails, fighting mud in summer and raging blizzards in winter to bring the gospel to this new generation.

The Methodists call him the Fabulous Brother Van, and well they may, for he was one of the most popular and best loved men in the state. He left for a memorial over a hundred Methodist churches—all debt free—fifty parsonages, six hospitals, and one orphanage.

He died on December 19, 1919, and his last words were: "Tell the people of Montana I love them all."

His funeral was the largest in the history of the state. The capitol building was draped in mourning and flags flew at half mast.

He is buried in the Prickley Pear Valley near Helena, Montana. A large granite boulder is the only marker on his grave; on it is engraved two words that tell, as no others can, the story of a beloved man whom God sent to tame the Wild West: "Brother Van." ●

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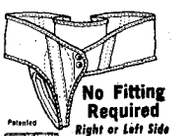
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THE FESTIVE COWBOY

(Continued from page 13)

Early in 1877, when bands of Indians began attacking camps in the Double Mountain country, the hide crews gathered in Rath City and formed a company of some 40-odd men to go fight the Indians. Jose Teofya, who had traded with the Comanches on the high plains, guided the avengers, all carrying long-range rifles. They also took along supplies, 250 cartridges each, four wagons and a 50-gallon barrel of whiskey.

The Indians' trail led west, up the escarpment of the Staked Plains. At Yellow House Draw they found the Indians' main camp and a day-long fight ensued. Several hunters were wounded. The Indians vanished. Later it was learned that the hostiles had suffered heavy casualties. Again the hunters' big rifles had driven off the Indians.

The tremendous range of the Sharps discouraged attack. Mooar, a bold but careful runner, liked to camp "... on them big flats. With two hundred rounds of ammunition we knew we could kill an Indian at four hundred yards... They didn't have anything they could hurt us with over forty or fifty yards. They had the Spencers and Winchesters and once in a while an Army gun, but we had a *real* gun."

The single-shot Sharps rifles, made in many models and calibers from .40 to .54, could shoot accurately at long distances. Billy Dixon, at Adobe Walls, killed an Indian at seven-eighths of a mile, using a Sharps .50 rifle.

Mooar had two weights of Sharps. During seven years of hunting, he killed 6,500 buffalo with his 14-pound rifle, and 14,000 with his 11-pound rifle. On still, quiet days, he carried the larger rifle and depended on getting stands or kills ranging from 10 to 60. On windy days, when the buffalo were usually more restless and tended to drift, he would drift with them and take his lighter rifle.

He ran a greasy rag on a wiping stick through the barrel after every four shots, because the black powder caused the barrels to foul heavily and you could ruin the barrel by too rapid shooting. If the hunter didn't have a canteen or bottle of water with him, he would urinate down the barrel to cool it.

One day, returning to camp, Mooar topped a ridge and saw buffalo grazing in a valley. The sun flashed on a white object in the middle of the herd. He stared in disbelief. A white buffalo. Only a few had been killed, and Mooar himself had shot one in Kansas.

He rode fast to camp and left his horse. With one of his men, he advanced on foot, keeping to the cover of a creek bank for about 700 yards, then began creeping through the grass out on the prairie. He raised up and looked. It was a white cow. She fell at the boom of his Sharps. But suddenly the herd stampeded, rushing together, and veered toward the hunters. Mooar threw another shell into his gun and killed a charging bull. Still the herd didn't swerve. Reloading quickly, he knocked down another bull. But the buffalo rumbled straight for the crouching hunters. Faster, Mooar jammed in another shell. As the third bull crashed down, the herd split.

Mooar's trophy proved to be a four-year-old cow, believed to be the only white buffalo killed in Texas. He sent the hide to Dodge City and had it dressed as a robe.

Other hunters favored Remingtons and Ballards and Springfields and other makes of rifles, all single-shot. Repeating rifles then did not have strong enough breech mechanisms to stand the heavy powder charges necessary to down buffalo. The Big Fifty Sharps, for example, was sometimes chambered for a shell carrying 170 grains of powder and 700 grains of lead.

While the Big Fifty was the glamour gun, so to speak, its smaller-calibered kin seemed to perform just as well. Mayer's preference was the Sharps .40-90-420, equipped with set triggers. (These figures show, first, the caliber of the gun, which is the diameter of the bore measured in hundredths of an inch; next the number of grains in the black-powder charge, then the weight of the bullet in grains.) Later he shifted to the "Sharps Old Reliable" .45-120-550. The double triggers meant that after the hunter cocked his Sharps by thumbing back the hammer, he then pulled the rear trigger, which "set" the front trigger, making it a "hair" trigger for greater accuracy.

With a tube telescope mounted on the barrel, a hunter could hit a high percentage of one-shot kills up to 600 yards. Mayer found that English powder added 10 to 30 per cent efficiency to his shooting. Paper-patched bullets cut down leading in the barrels.

Those big buffalo rifles had a mellow boom or roar. A man soon learned the sound of the rifles in his outfit. Lighter rifles had a sharp, quick snap. That was one way to know when Indians were around.

Each night the man in charge of the outfit got his memorandum book and put down the number of hides skinned that day. It was remarkable how the tally added up. No wonder the buffalo thinned out faster than the hunters thought possible. One runner knocked down 1,700 shaggies in 27 days. One outfit took 4,500 hides in four months.

John Cook had a memorable experience. Conditions were right that day for a big stand. He sensed it. The wind was still and the buffalo tired after being bombarded from another watering place. They thundered to the creek in a pell-mell rush, drank their fill and plodded out to a flat to rest—some standing, some lying down. Those standing seemed asleep.

Cook shot an enormous bull. It merely cringed and went down. Some of the buffalo lying down rose at the boom. After two more kills, the shaggies ambled off a little toward the creek. Some milled around the dead ones, hooking them, smelling the blood, pawing the ground, throwing up their heads and bawling. When he killed the leader, the herd quieted down.

He continued to fire methodically. Now and then he ran a greased rag through the hot barrel. He heard a low whistle. One of the crew was crawling up with another rifle. Cook changed to it and, alternating guns, went on shooting for more than an hour.

Finally a big bull, wounded leg flapping, started jamming and crowding. He broke through and the herd began following. The stand was broken.

Walking over the littered flat, Cook counted eighty-eight glassy-eyed creatures, and the thought came to him: It was wrong to kill so many for their hides alone. He had shot mostly bulls because their hides were more valuable.

So the slaughter went. But the hunters had to ride farther and farther for game, and then they found only scattered bunches, and then singles, and then all they saw was the bone-whitened prairie. As early as March, 1878, merchants at Fort Griffin were complaining of dull times. Griffin's rapid decline as the hunters' main outfitting and whoop-'em-up town occurred in a matter of months. Buffalo rifles that had sold for $125 a year ago could be bought for $35.

The final frenzied gunning of the southern herd came the fall of 1877 and the following winter, when the horde of hunters took more than 100,000 hides. After that, what buffalo the hunters found were few and spooky.

Meantime, hell-raisin' Rath City died like a bull shot in the lights—suddenly in May, 1879. Charlie Rath closed his store. George Akin loaded up what whiskey was left and pulled for far parts. That month hunters began quitting the range, some to settle on fine ranching locations they had kept an eye on. One was J. Wright Mooar, who picked a site in Scurry County.

Except for the few calves Charles Goodnight had saved to begin his own small herd on his Palo Duro Canyon ranch, the great southern herd ceased to exist by the spring of '79 and the last remnants were believed killed in the Panhandle country near Buffalo Springs in 1889.

Some hunters took to the northern ranges. By the fall of 1883 the cold-blooded business was finished there. Save for a few hundred buffalo around Yellowstone National Park and a few protected by far-sighted individuals like Goodnight, the Northern herd had disappeared, leaving nothing of a once mighty 75 million. ●

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THE AGONY OF SILVERHEELS

(Continued from page 33)

has been known since then.

Silver Heels was probably no better or worse morally, or ethically, than the run-of-the-mill dance hall girl at that time, and equally as mercenary as any of them. Her only close friends, besides Bill Buck, were a Catholic priest and her landlady. In later years a U.S. senator who had spent considerable time in South Park and was in a position to know the circumstances, confided to a friend that Silver Heels was, without question, Buck's "girl."

It was her love for this man that awakened her long-dormant love for mankind in general and brought out the abundance of good that was in her. One winter—all winters were very severe at that 10,000-foot altitude—Buck was stricken with pneumonia on New Year's Eve. Silver Heels nursed him in his delirium through the long night until he died in her arms. The sudden tragedy was responsible for the great change in her life which hitherto had been no more than the existence of a gold-digger.

The same disease struck all the mining camps in the area very hard that winter and Silver Heels spent much of her time nursing those who had contracted it. After the epidemic subsided she continued to help out wherever there was sickness or injury. She was usually the first one at the bedside and the last to leave.

Soon the dance hall idol of the footloose miners came to be accepted and loved by the women and children, as well as admired by the men. She provided money for destitute families and grubstaked miners down on their luck: It was because of her unselfishness, charity and compassion for others that she became, to them, the Angel of Mercy.

Silver Heels proved that this great reversal in her character was not a passing fancy, or short lived, when a smallpox epidemic broke out in the camps. It turned out to be such a menace that all the women were sent to Fairplay, some six miles down the valley, for their safety. All of them went except Silver Heels; she remained behind in Buckskin Joe, a settlement near Alma, which was hit the hardest. Many died during the pestilence but the one-time dance hall girl stuck it out and lived through it.

After the ravaging disease had run its course the people of the district, as a means of showing their gratitude to the girl who had risked her life to care for them, collected $4000 to be given to her. A prominent citizen who later became a state senator heard of the collection and kicked in with another thousand for it. When the time came to present it to her, however, the "Florence Nightingale of the Mining Camps," as she was often referred to from then on, had disappeared. When she had left and where she had gone, no one ever knew.

The money was returned to the donors and instead, a 13,825-foot peak a few miles northeast of Alma was chosen as a fitting, everlasting monument to her memory. Known as Mt. Morton, it was sometimes called "Silver Hill" by the miners because of its appearance when covered with snow. It was renamed Mt. Silverheels and has retained that title for well onto a century. If anyone ever tried to change it he would be in for a rough time; Silver Heels is still the heroine of the folks in that mountain community.

A few modern writers of Colorado history have placed Silver Heels as contemporary to the early 1860's, but there does not seem to be any documentary evidence to support that date. Perhaps they figure the Wild West was wilder then than a decade later, of which earlier records bear many indications of her presence. Neither Augusta Tabor nor the Reverend John L. "Father" Dyer, both of whom came to Buckskin Joe in 1861 and lived there several years, said anything about her or the epidemics in their writings.

Alma, itself, was not laid out until 1872, and the above mentioned senator did not enter office until after Colorado became a state in 1876. Mt. Silverheels first appeared on a map in 1873. Published interviews with old residents and other accounts also substantiate the later date.

A few years after the disappearance of Silver Heels a well-dressed, heavily veiled woman began making annual visits to the old cemetery near the former site of Buckskin Joe. She would walk slowly among the graves and pause for a moment at each of those who had died during the plague. Old-timers were firm in their belief that she was Silver Heels, returned to mourn her old friends, with her features hidden as before. But, they asked, could it be for a different reason? Perhaps to conceal unsightly pock-marks that now marred the fair face of the mysterious but beloved former dance hall girl? It is quite likely that, having come down with smallpox while comforting a victim of the disease, she forever after retired from public notice! ●

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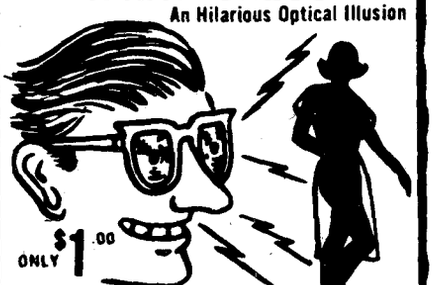

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JAMES BERNARD WILSON

(Continued from Page 27)

Moapa Indian Reservation. When the school was closed for lack of funds, MacGarigle continued to live in Southern Nevada, usually boarding at the ranch in Las Vegas where he instructed the Gass children, and those of the families in El Dorado Canyon and other settlements on the Colorado.

While he was employed by Wilson MacGarigle taught the two little boys—Indian boys, one fullblood and one breed—to read and write, utilizing the old-fashioned cursive scroll. One of the historical treasurers of Southern Nevada is a mathematics text, handwritten by MacGarigle for Tweed Wilson, with graded problems arranged on 35 pages in an old ledger.

As the years passed and new inhabitants came to establish homes near Las Vegas Valley, Wilson made friends with the Kiel, Stewart, Yount, and White families, now considered the oldest pioneer families in Southern Nevada. Somehow, Wilson's Indian family didn't quite fit into the social concept of the newcomers, and after 1890 Wilson became almost a hermit at the ranch that had grown to include the lands surrounding Cottonwood Spring (now Blue Diamond) as well as almost all other springs and grazing lands within a fifty mile radius of his original location.

That he had only adopted the Indian boys was forgotten, and even today the elder Wilson is usually referred to as "the old squaw man." His name and his historical significance has not been preserved in any place name in Nevada.

On a General Land Office map in 1892, the present Charleston Range is listed as Mount Wilson, but in 1935 when Barnes published "Arizona Place Names," including the former Arizona lands north of Colorado River, he could find no one who remembered why. Mount Wilson was only described as "East side Black canyon range, near latitude 360 degrees, in extreme northwest corner of State. Origin unknown."

When James Bernard Wilson passed away on May 3, 1906, Tweed and James Jr. placed his body in a small private cemetery near the old stone house.

The passing of this pioneer marked the end of an era for Las Vegas Valley, but few old residents remained to remember that Wilson had lived in Southern Nevada when it was a part of New Mexico Territory. He had seen his home become part of Arizona Territory, and sighed when these lands were made a part of Nevada, 150 miles from the nearest county seat. His short obituary contained no mention of his historical contribution to Nevada.

All of the extensive and valuable Wilson properties were left to the Wilson boys. They were undoubtedly two of the wealthiest young men in the area. However, with their limited education and lack of commercial experience, they soon allowed the Cottonwood ranch to revert to the county for nonpayment of taxes.

In 1905 Tweed was hired by the Union Pacific (San Pedro) railroad surveyors, and in payment had been given a deed to Lot 3, Block 24 of the original Las Vegas townsite. But that valuable property also soon reverted to the county as a tax default. By 1932, James Jr., was forced to sell the entire ranch for debts he neither understood nor seemed able to pay.

Upon the advice of sympathetic Mrs. Jean Fayle, wife of an important mining man in the new boom town Goodsprings, a guarantee of $100 a month maintenance and a life interest in the old log house for himself and his brother was inserted into the deed.

In 1943, James Wilson, his adoptive father's namesake, passed away, and Tweed lived out his life usually employed on the ranch he had once owned. In 1959, he died in the old house. Before his death, he gave to the author a metal box of family papers that included deeds and maps of the various Wilson properties, pictures of the family, letters to George Anderson from shopkeepers in Ivanpah, and letters to Wilson from Sam Yount, Harsha White, Charles Towner, Helen Stewart and others, that reveal much of the early activities in Las Vegas Valley, and these documents are held to contain some of the earliest historical records of the area.

A letter from John C. Kelly, Lincoln County Clerk, dated Pioche, October 9, 1888, to Jack Longstreet, who was employed as a farm hand by Wilson, reveals that every vote was important in sparsely settled Lincoln County, Nevada.

Longstreet, usually referred to as the "Ash Meadows bad man," wore his hair long to hide cropped ears received when he was caught in Colorado with a band of stolen horses.

"Friend Jack," wrote the County Clerk. "Having shown my willingness to befriend you when you were here on trial for beating Colonel Bradfute, I now appeal to you for assistance at the coming election as I am on the Democratic ticket for the Clerkship..."

By 1889, Wilson had heard that a railroad was planned to connect Los Angeles and Salt Lake City, and from James Morgan came this inquiry, dated San Francisco, October 6, 1889. Some twenty years earlier Morgan had electrified the scientific world with the reported discovery of a buried ancient city fourteen days travel from Austin, Nevada.

"Dear Sir," wrote Morgan, "You are living in the vicinity of the Potosi Mine. I wish you would find out for me if there is anyone living at the mine or meddling with it in any way... I have a patent on the mine that I suppose you know. I never

Howard Hughes, the eccentric multi-millionaire, purchased the Wilson ranch for a reported million dollars.

recorded it because it wasn't necessary. I shall be down next spring to start work on the mine. Let me know about the railroad if you know anything about it. Which side of the Potosi mine will the railroad run on? Has there been any surveys made there? I suppose Jim Olifus the Indian or any of those Indians can tell you if there is anything going on at the mine. You will do me a great favor if you will attend to this at once and let me know..."

In the spring of 1890, Wilson had sent his son Jim to help the widow, Helen Stewart, who had bought the Las Vegas Ranch from O.D. Gass. Mrs. Stewart's nearest neighbor was Ed Kiel, who lived on a ranch in present North Las Vegas. Kyle Canyon is named to honor this pioneer, but the name was misspelled as the long years erased the memory of this stalwart character who had worked as a carpenter in the employ of O.D. Gass.

"Friend Mr. Wilson," Helen Stewart wrote, "Jim and Hi got in 13 head of steers, but them and the gentle cattle broke the fence last night and got away. They did not hurt the wash cattle, yet am sorry for the accident. Wish Jim could

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stay a little longer, but it is time he was going home. Let him come soon again if you can spare him.

"Ed Kiel bought the Mexican's cattle and calves, all 198 head for $180 and $40 for driving them from the Muddy here. How is that!"

Just twelve years later, Mrs. Stewart sold her ranch to the Union Pacific (San Pedro) Railroad, and the lands were subdivided to create the town that would become a famous gambling center.

In 1904, an El Dorado Canyon prospector named Lawrence stumbled into Helen Stewart's ranch house in Las Vegas. Incoherent and suffering from thirst and exposure, Lawrence told of finding diamonds in some blue clay deposits near Wilson's ranch.

The word of a diamond discovery soon reached California, and on March 18, 1904, Wilson received a letter from an old friend in San Francisco, Alva D. Myers. (Myers had discovered gold in the Grandpah district (Goldfield) just a year earlier, and is credited with suggesting the name Goldfield for the town that grew up near his Combination claim.) Now, in 1904, Myers was interested in diamonds.

"Friend Wilson," Myers wrote, "I leave tonight for Goldfield, a new mining camp twenty-five miles south of Tonopah... Now, Wilson, I wish you would hook up the little mules and go to the place where we crossed the wash to strike the new road which we broke to the Sandstone. Perhaps you know what wash I have reference to. We crossed the wash, or rather left the wash to strike up to that bench or draw to get up to the Sandstone. If you remember, that was the place where I took up two or three handfuls of that blue gravel and put it in my handkerchief.

"Go up there I say and send me 25 or 30 lbs. of that blue gravel, not too coarse. Box it up securely and send it to my address at Berkeley, California. There might be nothing in it and the Dutchman might again be 'locoed,' but it looks to me that there is more than we think for. Don't say a word to anybody. Keep your own counsel and send me the gravel as soon as you can..." Myers concluded.

Strangely enough, the town Blue Diamond is now located in the vicinity of the wash where Myers had no luck on this venture, for Wilson was too ill to go on a prospecting trip. Within two years he passed away without revealing the location of the blue gravel wash.

Prospectors still seek the location of the diamonds found by Lawrence. Perhaps the letter found in Wilson's papers is a valid clue. Only recently, Howard Hughes purchased the Wilson Ranch for the reported price of over one million dollars, which would certainly have amazed both Wilson and Anderson, but seems a fitting tribute for these forgotten pioneers. ●

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THE SAD SAGA OF BIG ANNE

(Continued from page 37)

Cherokee Strip of its lawlessness, periodically sent committees to the county jail. These crusaders struggled fervently for the souls of notorious outlaws. Included in that number was a pretty, wide-eyed Miss with dark brown hair and dimpled cheeks named Jessie Finley. She came there hoping to convert the outlaws to Christianity—but was instead herself converted to outlawry.

The minute she laid eyes on Bob Christian she fell in love with him, and the outlaw, sensing her tumultuous feelings, flashed her a meaningful glance. He received in reply a look that made his heart quicken. Jessie's deep blue eyes succeeded where roaring six-guns had failed—he was captivated. He leaned closer against the bars and felt her warm breath against his cheek. She became a frequent visitor.

During the weeks that followed Jessie again and again appeared, each time a little more seductively dressed than before—behind the forbidding walls of the Oklahoma County jail. Sometimes the jailer glanced distrustfully at her low cut blouses, each of which revealed more than a fair view of her ample bosom, and at the tight skirts that fit suggestively around her full hips. He glanced suspiciously—and then suddenly remembered Jessie Finley to be a nice girl. If not so, why would she be coming there time and again, trying to convert these big bad outlaws.

And then one day she appeared outside the dark gates with a dinner basket. "Just a few things I've fixed up," she said, warding off the jailer's caution, "for some of the more orderly prisoners. I've won certain of them over to the Lord. After their release they intend to serve Him honorably."

The jailer, won over completely by those warm blue eyes, opened the door to the cell block.

Jessie took the basket to the boys' cell, and found it greedily jerked from her hands. Bob and Bill hastily tossed aside the edibles and came up with four six-guns, with ammunition. Now Jessie found the warmth gone from her would-be lover's eyes. Gone and replaced by a glint of evil. Bob brought the barrel of a pistol up against her nose.

"Now," he said, "you'd best begone. I'll get around to you later. I love you, yes. But first I've got to get out of here."

The boys waited until Sunday evening, June 30, 1895 to make their break. The guard, coming by to make his night check, glanced into their cell—and felt the cold barrel of a Colt 45 against his face.

"Quiet," Bob Christian whispered. "Make one wrong move and I'll kill you. Now—slowly unlock this cell door."

The guard did as he was told and then felt the gun barrel brought down hard against his head. He fell like a pole-axed steer.

"Let's go!" Bob shouted to his brother. "We're gonna release the Caseys. We'll need their help, fightin' off the officers outside."

Within minutes the Christians, along with Jim Casey, were bursting into the jail yard. (Vic Casey, not fully recovered from recent wounds, had chosen not to accompany them.)

Gus White, a bewhiskered carpenter "out a-ridin' with a lady friend," was suddenly surprised to find three men, all of them wildly waving guns, climbing into his wagon. He stared, big-eyed, down into the big blue barrel of Bill Christian's Colt 45.

"Oh, my God," his lady screamed. "Oh, my God."

"Out! Out!" Jim Casey shouted—and found the romancers too terrified to move. He tried in vain to push the lady from the wagon. Her 210 pounds was just too much. Bob Christian, frantic, began beating the horse mercilessly. With mule-like stubborness, it planted its hoofs in the dust and refused to move, while Christian whacked the animal time again and again.

Casey, wanting no more of this comical by-play leaped from the wagon and struck out running down Grand Avenue. He turned the nearest corner—and found himself meeting Chief Jones and several other policemen. He stopped short and then—bang!—he shot Jones through the heart. Reacting quickly, the other officers whipped their guns out and into action. They riddled Casey with bullets.

White's horse, now becoming terrified by the exploding bullets, suddenly broke out in a run. Caught completely by surprise, Bob Christian nearly fell from the buggy. However, he recovered quickly and guided the steed into furious flight. He managed to flee the town in a hail of bullets.

Badly wounded, he abandoned the wagon outside town, and followed the river for several miles, well knowing that he was leaving a trail of blood behind. Finally he leaped into the water, leaving sign behind to make the possee think he had drowned. Swimming and floating in turn, he managed to reach his home in the Seminole Nation. He was surprised to find his brother Bill waiting there for him.

"How'd you get away?" he demanded.

"That was easy! The posse followed *you.* I jest followed the back alleys outa town. Then I headed straight for here."

The Christians, with the bloodhounds baying hot on their trail, reportedly fled to Cuba and joined one of the rebel bands then fighting Spanish domination.

One evening in 1903 Satan's Half Acre was jarred awake by a deafening gunblast. A window at Effie Fisher's place on West Second was shattered, and the madam herself knocked to the floor, her body was torn in two. A midnight assassin had cut down on her from out of the dark.

At the coroner's inquest it was testified that Effie had been keeping steady company with Goldie Filson. Her beau's ardent attentions had led her to will him her entire worth and property, which was considerable. Goldie, a cheap tin-horn, had until just before the shocking event dutifully kept Effie's bed warm. Suddenly he lost interest in her, and began openly running around with other women. Effie, shamed to the point of distraction, had fled straight to her attorney and drawn up a new will. In this one she did not even mention her errant lover.

"So now," she'd pertly told her friends, "let him play elusive as an eel. I'll cut his electricity off."

But did she? The police who investigated her murder a few days later weren't convinced. They found reason to believe Filson was probably implicated in her murder. Certain of Effie's girls claimed their matron had been expecting her lover the night of her death. They recalled her as waiting before the parlor window, her lovely body silhouetted by the lamp light. She had been looking down into the street below, hoping at any moment to see her beau arrive.

When the others went to bed she was still waiting. Then in the dead of the night, they heard a gun blast, and found her dead.

Filson didn't bother disputing the girls' story. "Sure," he said to the arresting officers, "I was expected at Effie's that night. But I took on an overload of booze and failed to keep the engagement."

"Then where were you?"

"In my room. Sleepin' off that toot."

"Can you prove this?"

"No."

"You can't prove where you were at last night?"

"I can't prove where I'm at any night."

The police knew this to be true. Filson couldn't prove his whereabouts any night. Not without discriminating against either himself or his friends!

Finally the gambler tired of the questioning.

"Look," he said to the officers, "you don't want to pin this on me. I know too much . . ."

This apparently proved just as true. The Grand Jury, overlooking Filson's lack of an alibi, found him not guilty. After receiving the verdict he cockily walked across the court room, puffing on a dollar cigar, and blew smoke into the face of Ralph Romer, the prosecuting attorney. That airy gesture was meant to remind the official that what went on in Satan's Half Acre was not within his jurisdiction. (The Effie Fisher murder remains to this day unsolved.)

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During this period Tom Mix, later to become a great film star, was among the many "characters" who populated Grand Avenue. He was freshly discharged from the United States Army and not yet recovered from wounds received in the Philippine Insurrection and Boxer Rebellion. He had been tending bar in several of the tougher saloons.

Even then he was noted for his gaudy attire. Typical garb might have included snow white, gallon hat, silver trimmed cowboy shirt, and tight fitting slacks. His cartwheel spurs, several times standard size, jangled like cow bells as he strolled streets. The uniforms he wore later on movie screens, were no more colorful.

Tom Mix was just as tough as the characters he later played in the cinema. He had to be, for bartenders were expected to keep order in their saloons. His bar—and most of the others along Grand Avenue—had at the rear an enclosed back lawn. When customers got too drunk to circulate they were shoved through the rear door and left on the lot to sleep it off. All well and good—except on Sunday mornings. Then, when the saloon was supposedly closed during church hours, certain of the drunks, sweating out torrid hangovers, would burst in and help themselves to the temporarily prohibited wares.

In order to prevent this Mix stationed himself at the back door with a shot gun. He was a menacing figure, and he taught these unruly patrons to respect his establishment.

Mix met his first wife at the Booth Hotel on Grand Avenue. Jewel Perrine, whose family ran that inn and also a livery stable on West Second, was much taken with the handsome bartender. They were married at the home of her parents in December, 1905.

(Years later Mix once again became a familiar figure on Grand, but on movie screens rather than in the streets and saloons. Several movie houses, all specializing in Saturday matinee westerns, sprang up there among the dance halls and honky-tonks.)

For years Mix continued to live a rough and ready life. He cowboyed on ranches throughout the Southwest, served as a peace officer in some of the toughest towns in four states. Finally, in 1913, because of his past record as a Wild West performer, he succeeded in launching a movie career.

Early in 1904 Satan received a new disciple in his Half Acre. His arrival set the sin streets—Grand, Reno, California, Battle Row, and West Second—agog with excitement. Ed O'Kelley, the man who had killed Bob Ford and avenged the death of Jesse James, had come in on the afternoon stage. He had come, so went the word, to take over the town. He and Big Anne—formerly associates in crime at Creede, Colorado—planned to establish a joint domain in Oklahoma City.

So went the word—but little of it was true. Blood money rather than vengeance had brought on Ford's death. Although from Missouri, O'Kelley had known neither of the James boys. He, as previously related, had been paid by Soapy Smith to commit the crime.

Big Anne had not sent for her old friend. She was just as surprised as everyone else to find him pulling into town. She already "controlled" the courts of Oklahoma City—she had no wish for greater power.

However she remembered O'Kelley as an old friend and agreed to provide him a stake. She credited him with a room at her place, loaned him money for food, and got him a job with the city's street cleaning department. "You can earn a few bucks there," she said, "then make it multiply at my gaming tables."

The police department was hardly so hearty with its welcome. A young Cherokee peace officer, Joe Burnette, on the evening of January 13, 1904 arrested O'Kelley on a charge of being a suspicious character, and hauled him into jail. He was held 72 hours before being released.

O'Kelley went straight to Big Anne's. He objected to this kind of treatment.

"There's nothing I can do," the madam said. "Burnette can't be bought off. But he's a square shooter. He probably won't bother you again."

"He'd better not," O'Kelley said. "I've got two big pistols in my room. Sumpin' else happen 'n' I'm gonna be gunnin' down a policeman."

In less than an hour he was back on West First street, wearing a heavy overcoat. The curious noted suspiciously bulging pockets.

It was just past eight and officer Burnette was going from one to another of the many saloon and brothels, making his early night check. He had just left Lillian Johnson's place when he came face to face with Edward "Red" O'Kelley.

"Hello, Red," he said, nodding and passing on by.

"Howdy," O'Kelley reacted, lowering his scowling face.

A second later he turned and glared into the officer's back. "You so-and-so bastard!" he snarled, drawing his pistol. "Now I've got you!"

Whirling, Burnette came face to face with his antagonist, and quick as a flash he conked O'Kelley on the head with his night-stick. Then he grabbed his gun hand, causing the gunman to discharge his pistol harmlessly skyward. O'Kelley shot three times, but each bullet went zinging off into the night. As they struggled in a clinch, the gunman repeated in a frenzy: "I'm gonna kill you! I'm gonna kill you! I'm gonna kill you daid!"

By now Burnette's pistol was out and firing. While shooting, both men con-

(Continued on page 52)

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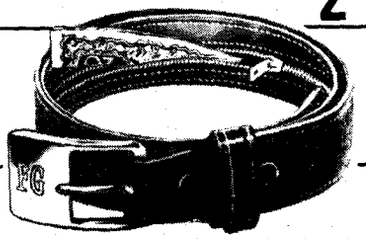

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THE SAD SAGA OF BIG ANNE

(Continued from page 51)

tinued struggling. Burnette kept O'Kelley's gunhand held high; O'Kelley had Burnette's other wrist in a vise-like grip and his pistol pointed downward. They struggled through the streets for more than seventy-five feet, finally reaching a vacant lot.

Just then Burnette's gun slipped from his grasp and fell to the ground. His other remained in his holster, out of reach. Unless something happened soon...

During this time—fifteen minutes or more—scores of men passed on the streets. Burnette cried urgently for help, desperately explaining: "I'm a policeman. I deputize you to help me."

One and all these honest law abiding citizens chose to mind their own business and hurried on by. One man paused just long enough to ask: "How do I know you're a policeman?" Then he ran like crazy through the streets.

Scores of curious eyes stared out at the scene from near-by store buildings. But none showed any desire to get a closer look.

Finally a lone policeman arrived, but that worthy found himself preferring the cool shade of a store porch to the heated climate of the vacant lot. He remained on the opposite side of the street and gave good advice: "Run, Joe, run!"

Finally R.G. Paul, a baggageman at the nearby Frisco railroad depot, ran up and grabbed O'Kelley from behind.

"Thank God," Burnette gasped. "Thank God! I thought no one was going to come!"

"Is his gun empty?" Paul asked, and almost simultaneously heard three explosions from O'Kelley's weapon.

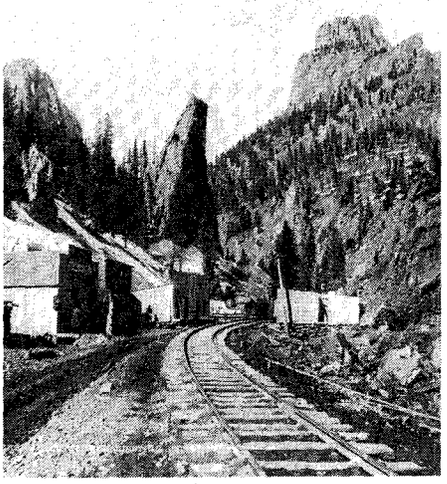
"Does that sound like it's empty?" the badman yelled.

Burnette suddenly released his grasp and went for his left holster. His second gun, out in a flash, came alive in his fist. Once, twice he fired, and O'Kelley crumpled to the ground. The fight was over.

Now men came running from all directions. They found Burnette, while still alive, to be in poor condition. O'Kelley had succeeded in gnawing almost his entire ear from his head. His overcoat was on fire from bullet holes. His left arm was badly mangled. The minute O'Kelley fell, Burnette himself sank almost unconscious into Paul's arms.

O'Kelley, shot once through the right temple and again through the left leg, lay dead in a pool of blood. He, like Bob Ford, had died as violently as he had lived.

In 1907 Big Anne's reign was brought to an abrupt halt. On the night of August 27th her brothel on West Second burned to the ground. Two of her girls and a "gentleman patron" died in the flames. The madam claimed it the work of her enemy



Anne came to Oklahoma City from the rip-roaring town of Creede, Colo.

and indignantly demanded a thorough investigation. She got just this—and was very sorry afterward. Police found evidence to indicate she herself was responsible.

She awakened one morning to find a police wagon pulling to a halt before her mansion.

"What is this?" she brassily demanded of her servants. "Don't them boys know who runs this town? I didn't send for them."

Although Big Anne hadn't yet felt the heat, the political climate in Oklahoma City had changed. Peace officers no longer found it necessary to cater to her every whim. The policemen forced their way into her home, and without even a pretence at politeness they placed her under arrest. When she resisted they snapped hand irons about her wrists. The dethroned "queen," was carried bodily from the house and thrown into the wagon. "Jedge" Peters, her colored porter, was already there, waiting, a woebegone look on his face.

"Miss Anne," he cried, "dey say we..."

"Just you be quiet," the madam demanded. "Shut yer trap good 'n' tight."

"Jedge" Peters did just as he was told. Big Anne, among her employees, was still queen.

Not so with the courts and police department. They now treated Big Anne like just what she was—a cheap whore. They threw her into a jail cell and, pending investigation, held her without bond.

She kept her fellow inmates, mostly common drunks and derelicts, cursing and shouting: "Aw, sh-a-a-a-d dap."

They felt nothing but relief the day Big Anne was released. Her cell door swung open and she—after posting $18,500—brazenly twisted her way into the streets. "You boys better get a case," she shouted at the investigating officers. "Otherwise I'll have your jobs."

The detectives knew this to be true. They went immediately to work—and just as promptly found unforeseen obstacles arising. Several witnesses, apparently recalling Big Anne's previous power—changed their stories entirely. Then an important piece of evidence suspiciously disappeared. Other leads led up blind alleys. They were all but ready to give up.

Then an unexpected witness appeared. Fannie Ritchey, a former inmate of Big Anne's then living in Dennison, Texas, suddenly came up with a version of what happened the night of the fire. She claimed her former lover had killed and robbed a man who lay sleeping in the brothel. He and Big Anne had spent the victim's money, a sum amounting to several thousand dollars. The killer had hauled the body away in a wagon and dumped it in the North Canadian River.

Big Anne later that night had supposedly panicked, and ordered "Jedge" Peters to destroy all available evidence. She had hastily departed, and a few minutes later her brothel went up in flames. Three persons, too drunk to react to the alarm, had died in the fire.

At first the police did not take the testimony seriously. They considered it the result of "a harlot's natural desire for publicity." Then the county attorney checked back files of city newspapers, and found that indeed a body had been discovered floating in the North Canadian the morning after the fire. Unidentified, it now lay buried in a pauper's grave. But just maybe it was the victim Fannie Ritchey referred to!

"Get that woman up here," he ordered the police. "We've got a witness. And also a case that could very well put Big Anne where she belongs."

Big Anne, for the first time since coming to Oklahoma City, was stunned speechless. But what did finally come from her voice sounded like a fog horn!

"It's a lie!" she bellowed at reporters. "A downright lousy lie! Why do you people believe her? She's an admitted whore! Yet you accept her word—"

"Are you not also a harlot?" an out-of-town newsman asked politely.

"Hell no!" Big Anne spat the words into the man's face. "I'm a madam. And a prominent property owner. I helped make this town what it is..."

On the morning of May 19, 1908 practically the entire citizenry of Oklahoma City overflowed the weather-beaten courthouse, hoping to see one of the most sensational trials ever conducted. The state had spent a reported fortune getting a case against the notorious madam. Big Anne—the same Big Anne whom they had so long called queen of vice, had in turn used up her entire estate, amounting to more than $75,000, to build up an effective defense. Both sides having spent a considerable amount on fireworks, no one wanted to miss out on seeing the big explosion.

In the end the trial proved a big disappointment. The state failed dismally in their efforts to find evidence bearing out Fannie Ritchey's testimony. Big Anne proved beyond all possible doubt she had

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not been within miles of the brothel the night of the fire.

"Jedge" Peters, a colored man who had lived all his life in the white man's South, proved beyond all possible doubt he had carried on an affair with one of the women who died in the flames. "Her white 'n' me black," he fearfully told the jury. "What would I wanna kill her fo'?"

Other witnesses testified as to Fannie Ritchey's dubious morals.

The jury had no choice but to return a verdict of not guilty. Big Anne found herself once again a free woman but, for the first time since leaving Colorado, without either respect or wealth. Unable to endure such a life in a town where she had once known prominence, she hastily moved to California. She died there a few years later.

Big Anne's departure didn't change conditions in Oklahoma City. A board of vice lords took over the underworld and made it possible for the town to continue to run wide open. The red lights continued to blink on West Second, the wine to flow and dice to roll in Satan's Half Acre. Those bold enough to protest such enterprise—made illegal with Oklahoma statehood in 1907—found either their families threatened or their heads busted in. Honest, law abiding citizens soon found it didn't pay to interfere with the underworld. It was best "jest to turn yer head and look the other way."

But life is full of surprises! In 1911 Mayor Whit Grant, newly elected with the vice lords' support, made a move that shocked the underworld. He called a news conference and provided reporters with their biggest headlines since the Winn-Peters trial.

"Sin and degration have thrived too long in Oklahoma City," he said. "I'm putting an end to it all. Already I've sent word to the only peace officer who is man enough to clean up Satan's Half Acre. He's right now on his way here. In a few days Oklahoma City is going to meet Bill Tilghman."

Yes, Mayor Grant had succeeded in enticing Bill Tilghman, super-lawman of the earlier frontier, the man who cleaned up Dodge City and disrupted the Dalton-Doolin gang—to the toughest assignment of his career. He had been made the Chief of Police, and ordered to clean up Oklahoma City.

The move neither shocked nor frightened the population of Satan's Half Acre. After all, Whit Grant had been elected with their support. Why should he move to offend his most loyal friends? His purpose—most likely—in hiring a legendary lawman was to mislead the decent reform elements. (And that included a majority of the long-suffering population of Oklahoma City.)

Before dawn arose on Tilghman's second day in office the saloon keepers were giving the new marshal a second thought. During the night he had led raids throughout Oklahoma City, closing down twenty five dives and arresting the operators of each. Just before slamming the cell doors on them, he made a little speech to his prisoners:

"You boys needn't worry 'bout bein' lonely. In days to come you'll be receivin' plenty of company. Most of your pals are gonna be joinin' you behind them bars. And this is just the beginning..."

During the weeks that followed Tilghman struck again and again at the city's many brothels and sin dens. Sometimes he went in alone, carrying no more protection than could be provided by his two Colt six-shooters; other times he was accompanied by several fellow peace officers. Always he came out with his quarry, whether they be bootleggers, harlots, or tin-horns. One after another they were run into court, where awaited a case too iron clad for their attorneys to break. After that came stiff prison sentences.

"I can't see that we are doing anything unusual," he said to the shocked and the horrified. "We are simply enforcing the law. That we will continue to do, so far as is in my power, so long as I am police chief."

The reform element rejoiced. At long last the great day was in sight. Mayor Whit Grant, a man whom they had not even supported, was going to bring law to Oklahoma City. His police chief, Bill Tilghman, the man who had cleaned up Dodge City, once the wildest town in the West, would surely do the same for their town.

But then something happened. Perhaps Bill Tilghman became tired and thereby relaxed his iron vigilance. One after another the dives and sin dens began opening up again. There was plenty of talk about it. Some claimed the legendary lawman had lost his nerve; others believed he had sold out to the underworld. A third explanation was that he yielded to political pressure.

Mayor Grant had been elected with underworld support. He would need it again at the next election. In return for allowing the town to reopen he would very likely receive the vice lords' favor.

And what of the reformers? They were not very likely to forget the many raids of Tilghman's clean-up campaign. Nor were they curious enough to look down over their blue noses and note the many dives and sin dens re-opening. Their eyes were set on loftier planes. A return to the open town policy would thus be good politics. Bill Tilghman was left to either play the game—or get out.

He chose to stay, and was probably sorry afterward. In the heat of the following election campaign one of his old enemies, an ex-bank robber named Al Jennings, appeared on the scene and challenged his honesty.

Jennings announced himself to be running for city attorney on a reform platform!

"Elect me," he said, "and I will succeed where Bill Tilghman failed. I will clean up Oklahoma City."

Ex-bank robber Al Jennings went ahead to proclaim himself now a champion of law and order. According to this topsy-turvy conception Tilghman in contrast stood for lawlessness and injustice!

"In the past it was just the opposite," Jennings handsomely admitted. "I was the outlaw and Bill was the lawman. But you the voters are concerned with the present day. Which will you vote for—law or outlawry—Me, or Bill Tilghman?"

Finally Tilghman became disgusted and turned in his badge.

"Al Jennings is making me feel a little ridiculous," he told the voters.

"That guy remains today what he was on the frontier: Nothing else but a big blow-hard. Of all the outlaws who stirred up trouble in early-day Oklahoma, he was the most ridiculous. His outlaw career lasted less than a single year. His only two attempts at train robbery resulted in fiasco and netted him less than thirty-seven dollars.

"Bud Ledbetter, one of my deputies, singlehandedly captured him and his entire gang. And this is the guy running for city attorney on his record as a reformed outlaw!"

Al did not bother denying Tilghman's charges. He knew it would do little good. There were too many old-timers still alive who remembered his outlaw career, and knew him to be just what the police chief charged—a big joke. He will forever be remembered as the Don Quixote of western badmen.

Al was overwhelmingly defeated in the election that followed. A voter summed up in simple words what was probably the majority's attitude: "It seemed a little ridiculous to make an admitted ex-bank robber responsible for law and order."

Tilghman's feud with Jennings would continue for a good many years. During the 1920's Al wrote a fictional autobiography, "Beating Back," presenting himself as the outlaw who outrobbed Jesse James. This he sold for a princely sum to *Saturday Evening Post.*

Uncle Bill, seeing his old enemy turning profits that would have widened the eyes of early day desperados and peace officers alike, hastily ventured to Hollywood and began producing movies exposing the story.

By this time Oklahoma City had finally yielded to the whims of civilization and allowed itself to be settled. But—although the fact is generally overlooked by history—it was the last of the frontier hell towns. Big Anne's ghostly presence, hovering over the wonderful town Oklahoma City is today, might take barren comfort in the thought that once she threw her weight around there! ●

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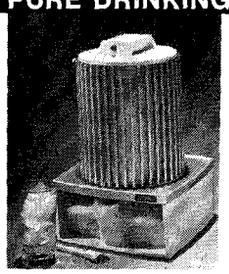

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THE TERROR OF 1874

(Continued from page 25)

if we can save some of the corn."

But the grasshoppers had scored all but a complete victory in the battle of the cornfield when the two men fought their way through the winged clouds to reach that wide field.

Only a dozen or so rows of corn remained standing. The hoppers were working on it. Others were finishing up the adjacent weeds and grass. Father looked at the field and realized that he would have no corn to sell this year—not even enough to feed his stock. His loss couldn't have been greater if the parasites had eaten up literal stacks of money instead of stalks of grain.

The two men plunged into the field waving their blankets. Father was cursing and Herman Rose was wishing he was back in New York State, which he had left the year before.

Father did his best flopping rolls of knotted blankets at the hoppers. For every one killed, a hundred more came out of nowhere. They even massed along the very blanket rolls used as weapons. Finally the two men had to admit defeat.

"It's no use, Herman," father said. "They've got the corn. They've taken the whole damned country."

Snip-snip. The two heard the mocking sound as they turned to fight their way back through more pyramids of grasshoppers to the soddy.

When they stepped into the yard, they saw that the hoppers had now started on the blankets covering the vegetable rows. Huge swaths of cloth had been eaten through. The noxious insects were feasting on leaves that had been exposed. Father didn't know what to do.

A moist drop fell on his head. He thought it was another hopper discharging its juice on him. He slapped upward with his hand. More drops descended. The drops were rain!

Enough rain fell to drown the hoppers bent on eating up his garden! But not enough to rid the settlement of Nebraska of them.

NEXT morning, thousands of grasshoppers lay dead in puddles and mud holes. But more thousands, alive and hungry kept coming. For miles around, the country looked as bare as a desert. There wasn't a sprig of grass left for a cow or a horse. Not a wild flower from which a honeybee might take nectar. Hoppers had swarmed into open hay lofts to swallow every bale. Father's young orchard had been stripped of every leaf. So had every other orchard in the community.

The grasshoppers were all over the West, devouring the fields of summer wheat in Kansas and Dakota Territory, as well as the cotton patches of Texas and the corn fields of Missouri.

Hoppers were so thick in Western towns that they swarmed into stores devouring valuable stocks of cloth and groceries. At Fort Scott, Kansas, an avalanche of the pests halted a horse race because the track was covered with three inches of hoppers causing prized racing stock to stumble and fall.

The Union Pacific trains came to a stop at Kearney, Nebraska. The crushed mass on the tracks made a treacherous goo that endangered passengers' lives by causing car wheels to spin. Horse trolley traffic in Dallas, Texas, was blocked. Along many Western roads, big limbs of trees collapsed from the weight of the pests.

The 1874 grasshopper plague was the greatest disaster from natural causes ever suffered by the West. It probably destroyed more property than all the floods and cyclones and various other "acts of God" which hit a booming new area hard.

Merchants went bankrupt because they couldn't pay their notes at the banks when grasshopper-hit farmers couldn't pay their accounts. Churches, schools and other institutions closed in communities that became almost deserted, as ruined, weary settlers moved out of the grasshopper belt. Finally the rest of the country awoke to the frank realization that the people of the West were in desperate need of help.

The result was that the Federal government, for the first time in our history, moved in with disaster funds. The funds were so limited, however, that they were soon used up in helping only a small percentage of the hopper victims. Several of the Western states also issued "grasshopper bonds" to aid citizens who wanted to stay in the area. A charitable drive was started in the East. Millions of dollars were contributed for those broke, afflicted settlers in the West.

The Santa Fe Railroad generously hauled freight free for Kansas farmers along its lines, and presented them with seed wheat for new plantings.

Heartened by all this, the settlers rallied against grasshoppers as they'd rallied against outlaws and other calamities before. In 1875, the eggs laid by the pests began hatching so that there were even more to contend with. But steps had been taken to prevent a recurrence of the first onslaught.

Nebraska enacted its noteworthy Grasshopper Act declaring the pest to be the main public nuisance. Anti-grasshopper vigilantes were provided for in the statute. Every able-bodied boy between 16 and 20 had to take his turn in this force mobilized to kill the hoppers.

A bounty of 50¢ per bushel on grasshoppers was decreed by Minnesota whose wheat industry had been so badly affected by the parasites. The Minnesotans built trap boxes and placed them over their reaper platforms. The boxes filled up every 15 minutes or so. Paying the grasshopper bounty almost bankrupted the state treasury.

Kansans formed anti-grasshopper organizations along military lines with the main weapons being brush brooms. Father kept a clipping from the *Atchison Champion* telling of one such blitz against hoppers.

The account said:

"The men assembled near the village of Muscotah, 200 strong, armed with brush brooms, clubs, pitchforks, blankets, and some carried shotguns. As they marched into the battle they were led by a brass band that gave a tinny and at times an off tune rendition of a military march. Whether it was the brooms or the blankets and shotgun blasts that caused the hordes of grasshoppers to flee in front of the army or whether it was the off tune music isn't known for sure. But the grasshoppers did flee."

By 1876, the grasshoppers were gone—all but the little native kind that feed mostly on weeds and scrub grass.

But their wandering relatives came pretty close to cancelling out what has been called the winning of the West. ●

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PAIUTE POISON

(Continued from page 17)

An angry ripple ran through the ranks of the redmen. Wahe, the spirit chief, stepped forward. He was half-Paiute and half-Bannack, and he claimed for himself a sorcery of immortality.

"We have waited long enough," Wahe declared. "It is time they heard the drums of war."

Winnemucca scowled. "Your medicine is always bad." He raised his voice so all could hear. "When they march upon our sacred land, we fight!"

The ugly feeling reached a climax when the two Bannack squaws were captured and held prisoners. Winnemucca and a band of braves picked up the white men's trail which led them to Williams' Station on the Carson River. The women were rescued, the whitemen slain, and the station burned to the ground...

Major William Ormsby organized a party of one hundred and twenty-five volunteers. They set out for Pyramid Lake to avenge the Williams' Station tragedy.

"It's time to rid this country of Paiute poison," the major swore, and rode out ahead of the cheering column.

As they marched across the desert, they might as well have set off smoke signals, for the thick clouds of dust rising skyward warned of their approach. They were almost upon Pyramid Lake before they saw an Indian—and then it was too late!

The troop walked into the wooded basin, and were trapped in the gorge. A piercing war cry ricocheted among the rocks, quickly followed by hundreds of voices rising into a thunderous crescendo of screeching whoops. From every rock and tree zinged a hail of angry arrows.

Gunfire rattled against the walls of the rocky canyon as the poorly organized volunteers fought back. They were hopelessly outnumbered, and suffered heavy losses.

The fight did not last long. Major Ormsby fell from his horse and died on the field of battle. (He lives still in the memories of Nevadans, however, as a county where the capital, Carson City, is located bears his name.)

The survivors fled in terror across the desert. Some of the Paiute braves leaped on the backs of their swift mustangs to give pursuit. Thus they counted more coup, as the spears they hurled from their galloping ponies gave them greater striking distance—and more strikes.

The shifting sands soon covered the hapless volunteers, and only the hafts of the spears marked their graves on the trail back.

Stories of the massacre threw the far West into panic. The silver fortunes were forgotten. The pick was forsaken for the pistol. Meetings were held all along the Washoe Valley. Muleskinners, miners,

(Continued on page 56)

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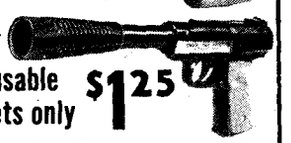

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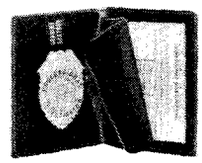

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PAIUTE POISON

(Continued from page 55)

Indian fighters, tinhorns—all the flotsam and jetsam that spawned in the West—gathered for the big fight shaping up.

San Francisco raised money and arms. The governor of California sent muskets and ammunition. Colonel Jack Hays in command of the Washoe Regiment of Volunteers—five hundred and fifty strong—was joined by others from Downieville, California. Captains Joseph Stewart and F. F. Flint moved out of Honey Lake with the regular cavalry of over two hundred troopers. They met the Washoe Regiment of Volunteers at the Big Bend of the Truckee. Like a huge sleeping serpent slowly awakened, a great mass of people stirred into a long creeping movement.

Once more the alkali dust signaled their coming to the Paiutes in their sacred stronghold. Chief Winnemucca, waiting at Pyramid Lake, watched the funneling whirlwind of dust bearing down upon his people like a desert sandstorm. He had approximately three hundred fighting warriors to throw against an enemy force of nearly one thousand.

There was trouble in Winnemucca's mind. Before it had been quite simple. They had relied on surprise and ambush. This time there were too many of them. They would swarm over the sacred soil and demolish it. Winnemucca knew the hour and the time had come. He had a grave decision to make, and now he shared it with his people.

"We can remain here," he spoke solemnly, "and fight for many suns and many moons. But to do so means our homeland will be destroyed by battle... or we can ride out and meet them, and save the sacred earth on which so many moccasins of our people have walked. Either way, the end is the same—a slow death, or a swift one."

A young brave vaulted onto the back of his mustang, and rode out of the shadows of the canyon into the brilliant glare of the desert sun. He was followed by another and another and still another. Finally Pyramid Lake was deserted except for the Indian women and children.

The Paiute warriors formed a battle line across the mouth of the canyon. Winnemucca rode to their head, and pirouetted his pony around to face the foe. His hand dropped down. The Paiute cry rose like crackling gunfire, and the Indians charged!

And now across the floor of the desert two whirling spirals of dust raced toward one another. Closer and closer, the swirling clouds whipped themselves as if onrushing cyclones until they met, and became one, and the battle began! Throughout the hot afternoon the fury of the fight could be heard—the bugler's charge, the clash of swords, the booming muskets, and the thudding arrows; the smell of blood and sweat and dirt; the crash of men and horses falling under; the curses and commands, and the cries of agony.

Black desert night fell. The dust settled. The dead were counted. The Paiutes suffered heavily, losing around fifty warriors. How many volunteers and cavalrymen were lost is not known, but casualties were "reported to be light," with three killed, and four wounded. The Indians, broken and beaten, stripped of their power as a fighting force, rode back across the desert to Pyramid Lake.

As a result of the outbreak, in July, 1860, Fort Churchill was established along the Carson River on the Overland Trail. The garrison patrolled the Pony Express trail eastward to Austin, Nevada, and well into the Sierras on the west. The Comstock boomed. The desolate outpost had a steadying influence on the Nevada frontier, and the Indians behaved themselves for a time.

The advent of the Civil War depleted Fort Churchill of its seven-hundred-man garrison. Volunteers took over most of the duties as the fort became a Union recruiting station. Indian war parties rode closer.

Exactly a year after the second battle at Pyramid Lake, rumors of another Indian uprising became more commonplace as a topic of conversation than the weather. In April, 1861, about fifteen hundred Paiutes assembled at the fisheries near the mouth of the Walker River. Mingled with the trapping of fish in willow corrals were the whispers of war. Wahe, the medicine man, was back, and this time he did not intend that his plan should fail.

Wahe's plan called for the murder of Warren Wasson, the Indian agent. With Wasson out of the way, the Paiutes could seize the rifles and powder at the agency. The next maneuver would be to filter into Fort Churchill in small groups, concealing their weapons under blankets and robes. At a signal, the Paiutes would slaughter the garrison. With powder, bullets, and guns from the fort's arsenal, there would be enough ammunition to arm the entire Paiute Nation!

"It will be easy," the crafty Wahe assured his people. "There are only forty white men in the fort."

The old men shook their heads. They were afraid of war, but they were more terrified of Wahe's vaunted magic. With reluctant misgivings, they gave their consent to the nefarious scheme.

There was one hitch to Wahe's timetable, however, and that was Warren Wasson, the Indian agent. He was a tolerant man; he had dealt fairly with the Paiutes, and he had cemented some strong friendships among them. When he was told what was going on by a young interpreter, his face turned white.

There was no time to send for help, nor to alert the tiny garrison at Fort Churchill. It was plainly up to Wasson to meet the situation alone and unarmed.

Taking his life into his hands, he walk-

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ed boldly into the mob of Indians at the fisheries. He knew many of the chiefs, called them by name, and said he wanted to powwow with them. He recognized Bannacks from Idaho and Oregon, and delegates of Paiutes throughout the Territory. There was a large war in the making.

"Wahe!" the Indian agent exclaimed, pointing an accusing finger at the medicine man, "I know about your devilish scheme. And I'm going to tell your people why it will fail!"

Wahe howled in rage and wounded pride. He pulled a long knife from its sheath and lunged at Wasson, but the Indian Agent side-stepped nimbly. The spirit chief was dragged back by rough hands.

"Hear me out!" Wasson shouted. "And then decide what is right."

Warren Wasson knew he would have to talk as he had never talked before. He scanned the unsmiling faces around him.

"You, Dianetro," he said, "and you, Black Bonnet, and you, Two Knives—you've traveled far—to California."

The chiefs nodded with satisfaction, happy to be honored before the other tribes.

"Then you have seen the white man's ships, the white man's great armies, and the white man's guns," Wasson told them. "You surely know what happened at the last fight at Pyramid. Do you want *that* to happen again?"

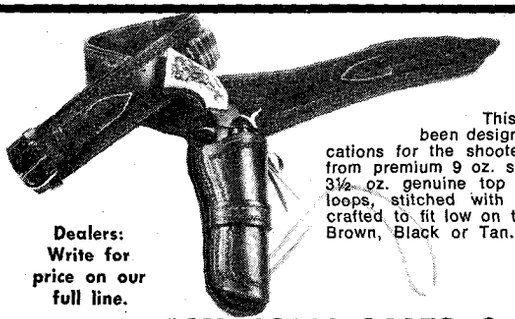
Wasson continued to talk. Wahe tried to stop him, but each time he was restrained. The Indians began to nod in agreement to Warren Wasson's words. They admired him for his cold courage, and they listened attentively.

Wahe saw the agent winning over the tribesmen with his straight-forward logic. Quietly he slunk away. He was losing his cause—and his nerve. Suddenly, panicky and afraid, he leaped on the back of his pony, and rode off across the desert.

Warren Wasson kept on talking. He sat down, crossed his legs, and smoked the peace pipe. Later, the Bannacks rode away to the north, while the Paiutes drifted back to their people. Wahe fled in terror to Oregon, his power gone forever.

Apparently he did not realize how very fortunate he had been to escape with his scalp. Months later he decided to return to Nevada, and he reappeared at the mouth of the Walker. This time, however, the Paiutes were unimpressed, and two chiefs promptly beat him to death with war clubs. Just to be sure that his medicine would never return, the Indians cut his body into small pieces, and scattered the remains across the desert.

In July, 1862, just to be on the safe side, Warren Wasson thought it wise to arrange a parley between Territorial Governor James Nye and the Indians. The Paiute poison was over. Peace returned to the Territory, bringing security to Fort Churchill, and Nevada was ready for the years ahead. ●



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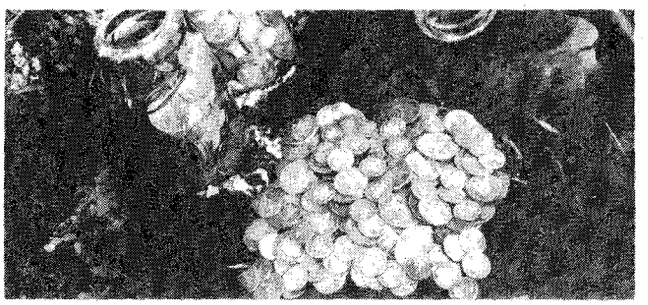

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DR. ROSE BURCHAM AND THE YELLOW ASTER

(Continued from page 39)

"Looks like we can chalk this up to 'high adventure' just like you said, Rose," Charlie admitted sadly one day. "Looks like we oughta been happy where we were."

"Nonsense," Rose admonished, "we shouldn't give up so easy...maybe next year will be better. After all, I can't say I've done too badly here, Charlie."

But Rose didn't understand. Sure, they could live pretty good. Rose's income would see them through until Charlie got settled into something else. But, thought Charlie, that wasn't right. A man ought to be able to support his wife. What if Rose hadn't been a doctor? What would happen to them if Rose became seriously ill?

Charlie mentioned these thoughts to Rose, but she would simply answer, "Hush, Charlie, everything will be all right...I feel it in my bones."

Three months went by and Charlie finally closed his meat-market. He was again planning to talk to Rose about going back to Wisconsin where he was known, and where he could get a good job, when news of an important gold find reached San Bernardino from Goler, out in the Mojave desert.

Things had been fairly quiet out there. Some findings inspired a few men to raise their hopes around Red Rock Canyon and Hard Cash Gulch, but until the early Spring of 1895 nothing exciting had happened, and only a jackrabbit would have asserted himself for squatter's rights on the dry chaparral-covered slopes. As yet the mountains below Goler bore no mining scars, and it was only occasionally that a wandering cowhand, rounding up his boss's cattle, or a lone prospector taking a short-cut to Summit Dry Diggings, left the imprint of man upon the dry, quiet, and gently rolling hills.

One evening after Rose had closed up her office and had come home to fix Charlie a dinner of steaming hot stew, she sat down to talk to her depressed husband.

"Charlie," she said, "I been thinking. I think maybe our future lies in the desert."

"What on earth are you talking about, woman?" Charlie asked, startled. "You getting sick, Rose?"

Rose went on talking. "I've been reading in the Los Angeles paper about some men up in Northern California, and some even right out there in the Mojave, finding nuggets worth a thousand dollars each."

"Rose, what are you thinking?" Charlie asked, bewildered.

"I'm just thinking, Charlie, that it takes a lot of investment, a lot of time, and a lot of work to make a profit of a thousand dollars in most businesses. Take mine, for instance. I work mighty hard sometimes to get a dollar or two from some of these poor Mexican women around here. Why, the other day I delivered the Ramos baby and they gave me a five-pound sack of flour for my pay. I don't need that flour, Charlie, and I gave it to the Simpsons...what I'm saying, Charlie, if you found three or four nuggets like those big ones, you'd be making more than it would take us two years to make here in San Bernardino."

"Rose, are you suggesting...?"

"Charlie, all I'm saying is that if you're game enough to try it, I'm game enough to back you up. I could take care of myself here, eat well, and still send you supplies and a little money now and then. If you strike it rich, we can go back where we came from, and enjoy our last years in peace and quiet."

Charlie lay awake that night thinking about Rose's proposal. Rose had been right so many times, thought Charlie. She seemed to possess a strange "instinct" that guided her. As long as he could remember, she seemed to know best what to do. She had even gently advised him against opening the meat-market.

They weren't getting any younger. If they decided to try once more to get rich, they had better start now, he thought. He *had* heard about the amazing luck of some prospectors up north; even in the Mojave a few men had made a good find. Not much, but *something.*

Charlie went to the desert. At first he made some money—being paid in gold dust—hauling water and using his team to scrape off the overburden of the placers. In his spare time, which wasn't frequent, and on Sundays, he prospected and dry-washed. When the gold dust from the miners didn't meet his needs for grub for himself and hay and grain for his team, he would write a letter or send word by traveler to Rose, to send him money.

Without fail, when he requested extra cash from Rose, it came. And with it came letters of encouragement. Never a complaint about how hard she worked, but words of courage. "Keep on trying, Charlie...I just feel in my bones that something good is going to happen..."

One day Charlie met up with John Singleton who'd been a carpenter in Los Angeles, and Fred Mooers, who had come out to Goler to see about the chances of starting a small weekly newspaper. Mooers had run a paper back east, and thought that perhaps here, in the dry desert, he could publish a paper for all these news-hungry miners around Goler, and the little camp-towns that spread over into Kern County.

But Singleton and Mooers had started prospecting too. The dream of finding gold had embedded itself in their heads too, the great dream of discovering a *big* mine and growing fabulously rich could not be erased from their minds.

The mining bug was definitely in Charlie's system, even though he had to be persuaded by Rose to come to the desert. But after talking to Mooers and Singleton, he agreed with them that the diggings weren't paying dividends on their expectations. Sure, they knew gold was out there beneath that rough, arid surface, but how in the deuce to find it—that was another thing.

Singleton and Mooers were penniless, scraping together anything that would carry them from one day to the next. Charlie was luckier, thanks to Rose back in San Bernardino delivering Mormon babies and dispensing medicines to old ladies—and he still had his water-hauling job.

The three mined together a few months, with no luck. One day Mooers said, "Let's give it one last fling, boys."

"You mean you're givin' up?" asked Singleton.

"I'm tired," Mooers replied. "I'm tired of looking day after day and finding nothing. I'm tired of the desert, the heat, the damned snakes, the food—"

Together, the three decided to set out on a last prospecting spree before splitting up, Mooers taking off for the east and Singleton leaving for Los Angeles to look for a carpenter job. Before that happened, Charlie Burcham thought, they could at least say they had one last good try, and all leave defeated but with the self-assurance that they had certainly tried damned hard to find the elusive nuggets.

Charlie himself just the night before had thought, *I've got a bellyful of this hauling and scraping—and hoping. I'm going back to Rose, and then we'll go back to Wisconsin where folks can live decently.* Now, after talking to Fred and John, he too would give it one more try. Just one more try.

That morning Singleton had reminded Mooers about the area over on the red hilltop where a fellow named Langdon had found color the year before. Mooers himself had found "a little color" there, but hadn't given it another thought. Burcham had overheard a conversation a few days before about "a couple of men plan to go over where Langdon found color..."

It was the talk about this overheard conversation and Singleton's optimistic feeling about that hill, that made them decide one more try wouldn't hurt. What a tragic note it would be to leave the desert and learn a few weeks later that nuggets were found on that hilltop. No. They mustn't leave now. One more try will do it, they thought, even though Mooers still complained about being tired of the desert and all its discomforts.

After testing some nearby ground, the three decided to climb to the top of the red-stained peak. Far up on its side they

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stopped to take a deep drink from their canteens, and to study the vast spread of desert that lay before them. They gazed out upon large playas, whitely shimmering under the bright sun. In the distance lay the beginning of the great Sierra-Nevada range, the same range that had earlier provided such a timely financial cornerstone for the nation's great western empire. The three were inspired to go on.

As they turned to continue climbing, Singleton idly knocked a specimen from a large rock mass. As he turned the piece of rock, he could see its freshly broken side. His eyes widened. He gasped.

"Charlie!" he yelled. "Fred!"

Both men turned.

"It's here! Gold! It's right here!" He began dancing a jig and yelling excitedly. "It's here! It's here!"

Taking one good look, Charlie Burcham shouted, "We're rich! Oh, Rose," he called aloud to the wonderful wife who wasn't there, "we've hit it! Oh, Rose, you were right—we're rich!"

The happily crazed trio slapped each other on the back, all screaming with boyish delight. Such a sudden find was almost incredible, Charlie thought suddenly, and he dashed to the rock mass and feverishly broke off another specimen. He knew gold. He'd seen plenty of it. This *was* it. This was gold—and it was everywhere. There must be thousands of dollars worth of it, right beneath their feet! *Wait 'til Rose learns about this!* he thought.

On the 25th day of April in 1895 the three prospectors staked their original claims. Proper entries in the record book were made in the town of Bakersfield. They had no money or backing to mine the mountain, but somehow, they believed, they would find backing. *But they mustn't lose the mine,* they thought, and promptly formed a partnership. On the day they talked to a government man about their partnership, Charlie had read the title of a book he saw in the office. It was a popular paper-backed pulp novel called "A Yellow Aster." Outside the office, stretching over the hills, lay carpets of yellow asters in wild profusion, whose lovely scent filled the air. So the three named their mine *The Yellow Aster.*

No miner with a rich strike on his hands ever had to wait long for human companionship. Visitors began pouring in from nearby placer camps within a few days. Three weeks later Charlie Burcham left for San Bernardino with his team—to see Rose—and to raise money for their immediate supplies. It was while he was away from The Yellow Aster that things began to happen.

In his absence a fellow named Stanton rode in from Bakersfield and invited Mooers and Singleton to talk over a proposition for developing the claims. Stanton with his highly persuasive powers and bright promises convinced Mooers and Singleton that they should sign an agreement, written right on the spot. For financial assistance, the agreement said, the owners would give one O.B. Stanton half interest in the mine, and would add a clause giving Stanton option, at the end of six months, to buy the entire mine for $500,000.

The contract was supposed to be contingent upon Burcham's signing on his return from San Bernardino. In the meantime Charlie and Rose were gathering supplies in San Bernardino. Through an attorney, he had already assigned half of his one-third interest in the claims to Rose.

They were on the wagon, headed back to their house on the edge of town, when Rose spoke. "Charlie, whatever you do, don't sign any papers until you know the real value of your claims," she said. "There's lots of people in this world who enjoy taking things away from other people. Just remember that!" Did this woman with the "sixth sense" have a glimpse of what might happen, or was happening, to Mooers and Singleton out there in the Mojave?

Burcham's feet had scarcely touched the ground back at the claim site before Stanton's contract was shoved under his nose for his signature. He remembered Rose's advice, and he refused to sign. Apparently that settled the matter—for a time. Two days later he wrote to Rose that several propositions had been presented to him by various "investors"—men who wanted big chunks of the mine. One investor, he wrote, had said that with very little development, the mine could bring $300,000 and that he would develop it—if the three prospectors would sign over $200,000 of the sale proceeds to him in one year!

Rose wrote back: *"What a petty thing! You mustn't sell even if you are offered twice that amount. Try to show Mooers and Singleton how foolish it would be for a quick sale to be made this early. I feel it in my bones that you should hang on to it..."*

An excerpt from one of his letters back to her reads: *"More gold has been found in the Rand Mountains. There is big excitement here... the hills are getting full of men... one mine has been named the King Solomon."*

After a few lonely months, "Doc" Rose Burcham made up her mind to go to the desert. Her husband's letters had sufficiently alerted her nimble mind to the temptations facing her three partners. She had heard about mines being lost to the original locators while under the influence of liquor or by a tempting, but most inadequate, cash offer. *If any money is going to be exchanged for The Yellow Aster,* she thought, *I'm going to be there to see that Charlie and me get our rightful share!*

Charlie drove his team down to the

(Continued on page 60)

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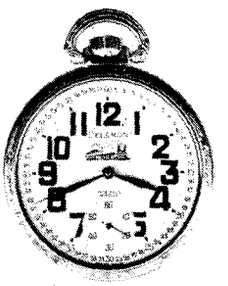

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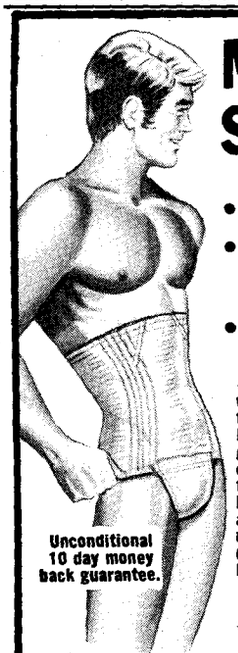

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DR. ROSE BURCHAM AND THE YELLOW ASTER

(Continued from page 59)

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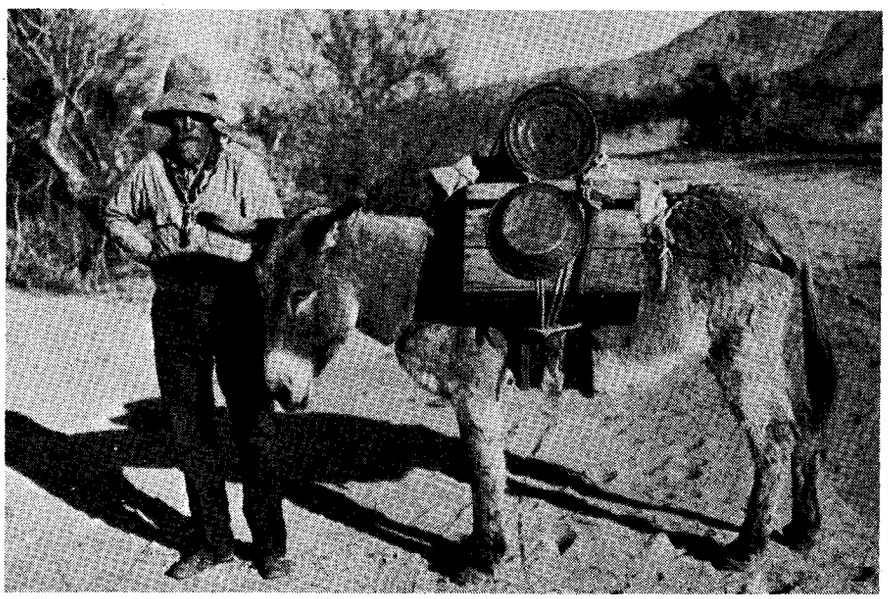

Old-timer and his donkey typical of prospectors in Randsburg area.

little cross-road town of Mojave to meet Rose that hot July day. Getting a late start from Mojave, they were unable to finish the 50-mile trip to Rand Camp that night. They stopped after dark and Charlie made a bed on the ground for Rose. The tired doctor sank onto the camp pad and blanket. "First time I've ever slept on the ground," she said. "But as tired as I am, I'll probably be asleep in three seconds."

"Rose," Charlie spoke to her as he was putting down his own bed, "some day I'll buy you a bed fit for a queen, you just wait and see—"

A few hours later she was climbing down from the cruel hard seat of Charlie's wagon. She had at last arrived at Rand Camp, which was to be her home for several years. She looked around her. A few white tents were set up here and there, scattered in uneven rows, reaching up the slopes of the mountain. *There's going to be a town here some day—and I'm going to see it grow,* she thought.

Until lumber could be bought out from Los Angeles and Bakersfield, Rose had to live with the conveniences—or inconveniences—of the camp: the ever present burlap-covered cooler of the desert dweller, the "rock stove" built right on the ground in the open, the old wash tub used for both bathing and washing clothes, the pails of water covered with cheesecloth to keep insects out.

"Doc" Rose cooked for Fred Mooers and John Singleton as well as for her husband. She laundered their clothes, patched their pants and shirts. She usually performed these "wifely" duties in the evening by lamp-light, as most of her days were spent cooking, driving over to Goler to pick up supplies and groceries, and calling on men who had hurt themselves in some manner during a scraping or other mining job. She was the prospectors' "lady" doctor, although some old sourdoughs wouldn't let the attractive woman get near them: "Ain't right for a woman to be out here doctoring us men—" some said defiantly.

As Rand Camp grew into the bustling town of Randsburg, "Doc" Rose became busier. As more women arrived in town, her practice grew. Not too many women came to Randsburg. Not many who came stayed. But one lady who was welcomed was Mexican Nell.

Nell had earned quite a reputation as "an entertainer of men" in other camps. She was a popular singer, as were two of her sisters, but Nell was favored for her beauty and her "ways with men." Nugent's saloon soon hired her as a singer.

Rose didn't like this. She had bought a silent interest in a saloon called the Yellow Aster Saloon. Nell made business bad for the saloon on those nights she sang at Nugent's. How Nell made money after hours was of no concern to "Doc" Rose, but when she kept men away from The Yellow Aster Saloon, Rose made her objections heard.

But Mexican Nell remained—and the menfolk were happy. One day Nell fell violently ill, probably from a severe case of flu. Old "Aut" Smith sent for Rose. In minutes "Doc" Rose had arrived at Nell's tent behind Nugent's. She spent the entire night there, keeping watch over Nell, keeping her temperature down with cool water baths and alcohol rubs.

When word spread through town the next day about "Doc" Rose sitting up all night taking care of sick Nell, all the men in town seemed to converge on The Yellow Aster Saloon that evening to celebrate—and to pay respect to "Charlie Burcham's good wife." Nell would still be around, thanks to "Doc" Rose!

For two years Rose and Charlie, along with Fred Mooers and John Singleton, fought off a lawsuit brought against them by Langdon who had originally "found color" on the red hilltop. Even Stanton who tried to take a slice of the Yellow Aster Mine brought suit, claiming the contract signed by Mooers and Singleton was valid.

Rose mistrusted all outside offers of financial assistance. The men left most of the detail work of the business in her hands. They were still pick-and-shovel miners, but Doctor Burcham was the financial guardian, as well as cook and wash-woman.

Rose borrowed money from whomever she could find, in small amounts only, (so that no one could demand shares in the mine as collateral) to get the mine operating profitably. In less than two years ore mined at the Yellow Aster was bringing $150 a ton. Ore was being shipped to the huge Grant Smelter in Omaha. Money began pouring in.

Rose handled it all. She made several trips to Los Angeles to invest some of the money and purchased a magnificent house in what is now the Bunker Hill area. She bought into another mine near Johannesburg in 1899. But the Yellow Aster remained the major mine in an area of many mines.

Rose and Charlie grew very rich. Their mine produced gold ore for 47 years and operated up to 1942. According to one estimate it produced $16 million. Rose and Charlie, after expenses of operating the mine, could claim one-third of the net profits.

"Doc" Rose outlived Charlie, spending the last years of her life in her big home in Los Angeles. Fred Looers and John Singleton broke their friendship early in their partnership, and Singleton split up his share with relatives and hangers-on.

Just before Rose died in August of 1943, she still possessed some shares of the Yellow Aster and a few she had acquired from some of Singleton's relatives. They were worthless of course, as the mine ceased operation in August of 1942, but Rose never gave up hope. She loved gold. She loved the excitement of new discoveries, the thrill of growing rich.

Just a few months before her death she told a newspaper interviewer, "I feel it in my bones—there's still gold out there in the Mojave—lots of it—and maybe there's more right there in the Yellow Aster—"

She never lived to find out. The Yellow Aster is still quiet. But there are some old-timers around Mojave and Randsburg today who say, "Rose Burcham had an uncanny instinct—she was usually right about most things—"

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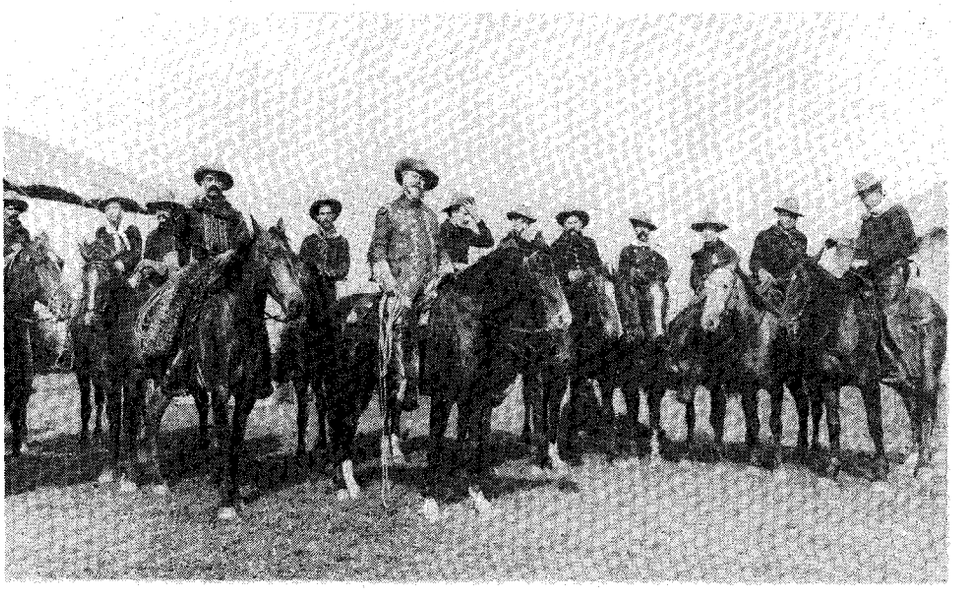

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LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT TO LOST GOLD MINE

(Continued from page 31)

The old man from Sonoita said that anyone should take great care in starting the search and should first talk with the old folks in Sonoita, asking them point out the old road that leads from Quitobaquito to Tinajas.

Then, with a request that if anyone found the gold mine to remember his daughter, the Sonoita soap maker signed the will.

Pablo Cordova had a son who never looked for the gold mine. His sister did nothing. The son, no doubt, after hearing the sagacious words of his blind father, had no desire to embark upon a treasure hunt in the fierce Cabeza Prietas. The son said his father often told different versions about the discovery, solely to throw people off the course, in case they searched for the mine. This may account for the different waybills that are in existence today. He swore that the will was the true and correct version.

Years later, Harold O. Weight obtained a copy of the will from a man named Benjamin Byrd, who lived in Arizona. Weight has searched for the mine, but has not found it.

Cordova's directions are explicit, it is true. And there is a third peak which may be seen from the point he mentioned in the will. Both the three peaks and Tule Well are noted in the Geological Survey map of the region. Tule Well is mapped as being almost due west of Why, Arizona, a highway junction about eight miles south of Ajo.

A son of C. O. Bustamente, who drew up the will for Pablo, made a search for the gold mine. After spending a thousand dollars on the venture, he threw in the towel and never returned to the defiable stretches, saying he'd had enough of the deadly wastelands.

Others have made futile attempts. But the gold is still there on the north slope of one of the three ostensible peaks, which is obvious from a fork in the trail near Tule Well.

Papago Indians on today's nearby reservation know the legend of the lost gold mine and like to talk about it. And we can understand why there is more talk than prospecting, and why people back away from an attempt to follow the directions so clearly set down in the old soap maker's last will and testament. Man likes to hang onto life as long as possible. And any time he enters the rugged Cabeza Prietas, he's gambling with death!

Deadly rattlesnakes abound in the Cabeza de Prietas. Prospectors should include a snakebite kit in their pack when they set out.

The country during the summer months is extremely deadly, certainly not good for prospecting. Winter is recommendable. And the point to outfit for the conquest would be Ajo, Arizona, where proper equipment of all types may be obtained. First, however, an exploratory to Sonoita whould be made, just to familiarize yourself with directions, because Sonoita is the hub of all these.

Any prospector should make careful plans before entering the region. Carry ample provisions, snake bite kits, and a well reviewed regional map—perhaps one furnished by the Department of the Interior. And the best entry point, once everything is in readiness, is from the Ajo copper mine complex. Here a vague trail to the south may be picked up. This will require 4WD equipment to traverse.

Then one is on his own! You might wish to seek the Almighty Hand, for you'll be in the Devil's own domain. ●

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THE TOWN THAT WEPT AND LAUGHED

(Continued from page 43)

a dancer in her high kicks "showed flashes of bare leg above her stockings." And great-grandpa—that old rascal—preferred his kickers to be of beefy build.

But it must not be assumed that everything in that whirly-girlie hotspot was indecent or even indecorous. While there was much, indeed, that was done *de gaiete de caeur*—out of sheer wantonness—there were also many very fine acts that did not depend on smut to win applause. Much first-class theatrical talent hit the boards at Tombstone, in a stopover between big city engagements from the East to the West and vice versa.

One of the most memorable performers was a petite danseuse named Pearl Ardive. She had foresaken the ballet but had kept its grace and beauty. A much-liked amusement of the audience was that of tossing coins to the female performers on stage, be she sing-song girl or solo dancer. A generous amount of coins were showered on Pearl, and she was able to retrieve them from the floor and tuck them into the tops of her long stockings without missing a step or losing a coin.

And there was Eddie Foy, whose name is writ large in theatrical history and remembered today! He and his company played in Tombstone for a month between the end of an engagement in Denver and the beginning of another in San Francisco.

Eddie liked Western towns. He had performed in several, including Leadville, Colorado and Dodge City, Kansas. In Dodge City he had met Bat Masterson and become his fast friend.

In his autobiography titled *Clowning Through Life,* Eddie Foy recalled his Bird Cage engagement in what he called "a rather wild-eyed little town." But what he remembered best about Tombstone was "its climate and surroundings—heat, desert, dust, cactus, the sun always glaring from a clear sky, and in all directions there, the distant, jagged blue mountains on the horizon, rough in outline, but the only restful, beautiful things in sight."

It should be noted, in passing, that Lotta Crabtree, another famous performer, *never* honored the Bird Cage with her salutary presence, although many a penny-a-liner would disagree. It is true, however, that her brother Jack Crabtree lived in Tombstone for a short time. He repeatedly said that he would build a theater there for Lottie. Of course that was nonsense, for he was a financial failure who, to a marked degree, depended on his sister for mere subsistence.

George W. Parsons, a self-appointed recorder of Tombstone events, and a moral man withal, noted in his diary under May 11, 1882: "Went to theater or variety show with Redfern (a friend) at his invitation. Rather poor. 'Patte Rosa,' however, danced well. Ed Schieffelein (founder of Tombstone) seems to be badly gone on her.

"Hats on—for those who wished. Took off coat and sat in shirt sleeves most of the time. Began about 9:30, when house was full, and lasted till about 12."

That was probably the only time that Parsons was seen in the temple of sin. (He believed what he wrote in another entry: "A man will go to the devil pretty fast in Tombstone.")

When the show was over, the folding chairs were folded up and stacked away to make room for dancing. Performers, especially of the female brand, joined the dancers and frolicked around. Also, tables were set up and chips and pasteboards provided for gambling.

Occasionally there was free impromptu entertainment, outdoors in the shadow of the Bird Cage. One such improvisation was itemed in the Tombstone *Epitaph* as follows: *"Not on the program.* A couple of female attaches had a hair-pulling contest which, but for the promptness of Joe Bignon, might have ended in a general row."

Another unprogrammed feature was also a hair-pulling contest between two irate women. It was better than the other because of added attractions. "During the melee," the *Epitaph* reported, "various and numerous articles of feminine wearing apparel were flying wildly through the air and the total annihilation of everything present seemed imminent. The only intelligible expression heard was, 'How dare you interfere with my husband?' The contest was a draw."

The Bird Cage was open all day and all night for nearly three years. Billy Hutchinson then closed it and sold his property—in July 1883—to John Stoupe and Hugh McCrum of San Francisco. Apparently they made no use of the building, for it was dark and quiet until January, 1886, when Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bignon bought it and opened it as a sports center, for boxing and wrestling matches especially.

It continued as a place of amusement until July 1892. After that, unattended for years, it fell into disrepair. Someone then decided that it would make a good museum and forthwith patched up what time and weather had been allowed to do to it. And thus it stands today for the edification of curious—and imaginative—tourists, and students of history. ●

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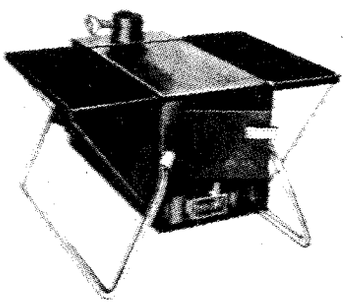

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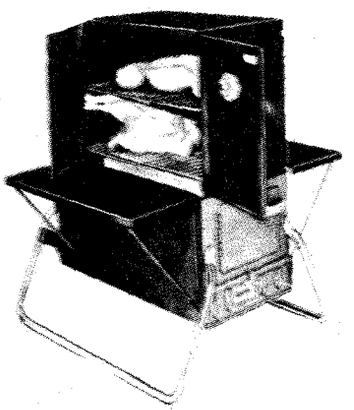

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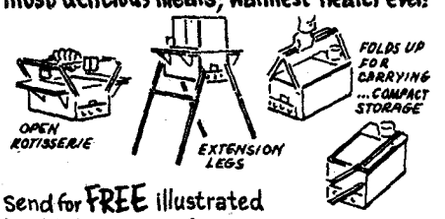

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ROUND-UP TIME

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. What are the cowboys on the island of Hawaii called? H.D., Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

A. Panioles.

Q. What is the address of the Indian Center, in Los Angeles? W.W.H., Fresno, Calif.

A. 3446 W. 1st Street.

Q. How was a "miner's washboard" made? T.H.O'C., Ripon, Calif.

A. A pine slab was marked off with horizontal lines and then notched on the lines with saw and pocketknife to emulate the ridges of a washboard. The writer once saw one in the Black Hills.

Q. What did the fashionable women of the old West call it when they saw others —ranch-bred women— riding astride instead of with side-saddles? Miss E.T., Omaha, Nebr.

A. The more reserved called it "riding clothespin style." Others called it "straddling."

Q. When Dora Hand was shot to death in Dodge City, how did they know that James Kennedy was the murderer? H.L., Hays, Kans.

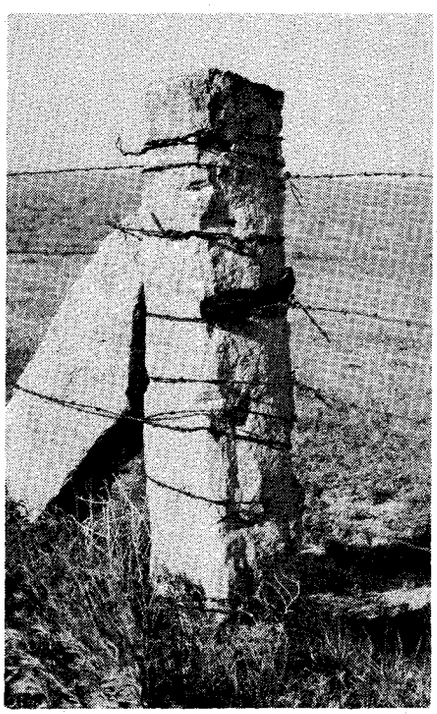
A. On October 4, 1878, following the murder of Dora Hand (alias Fannie Keenan), a Coroner's Inquest consisting of P. L. Beatty, and Messrs Means, Cornell, Straeter, McIntire and Lougheed, named James Kennedy as the assassin. After Kennedy's apprehension by a Sheriff's Posse near Meade, Kansas, he was returned to Dodge City and a hearing was held on the matter. At this hearing *Kennedy was acquitted,* before Judge R. G. Cook, the Justice of the Peace, and acting coroner. The fact that he was from a very prominent Texas family, and that he was badly wounded, losing the use of an arm, no doubt contributed to this decision to release him to custody of his father. His previous acts include the shooting of Print Olive.

Q. Are there any organizations of Indians in the West, working toward the aid of non-reservation young Indians? S.A., Trinidad, Colorado.

A. Yes, one new group has been organized in Denver. It is Call of the Council Drums (CCD); Terrance Booth, president. Jim Angle, non-Indian member of the group's executive council, explains that the group aims to initiate programs designed to give employment to urban Indians, to help them obtain housing and encourage them to attend schools. Traditional disregard by the Indians of time and money is being discouraged, yet traditional Indian cultural characteristics are being explained and maintained.

Q. Has stone ever been used for fence posts? V.L., Streeter, Ill.

A. Yes. And old limestone slabs that were quarried in western Kansas in the late 1880's still hold up three to four strands of barbed wire on ranches there today. The "bell rock" stone is from the



"Bell rock" was used for fence posts, some of which still serve purpose in Hodgeman and Ness Counties.

Cretaceous formation, and once held up more than 50,000 miles of barbed wire. A great amount of the stone in blocks was used in ranch buildings, houses, barns and shelters, and many buildings can still be seen in Hodgeman and Ness Counties, constructed of limestone blocks.

Q. Was there a first-hand account of the U.S. Army's camel caravan from Camp Verde, Texas, to Arizona ever written? What was its title, and who wrote it? H.G., Fort Worth, Texas.

A. Yes, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1929 published the diary account written by Ma H. Stacey, an officer in the Union Arm during the Civil War. Stacey was a well-educated man who had been commissioned in the U.S. Navy. He was 19 when he made the expedition with Lt. Edward F. Beale's command of camels and drivers. The work was titled *The Journal of May Humphreys Stacey, Supplemented by the Report of Edward Fitsgerald Beale (1857-1858).*

Q. So many western people still say "Howdy" when meeting you on the street. Where did the word come from? G.H., Stillwater, Pa.

A. It's just short for "How-d-ya-do." It's always meant in a friendly way, and you do not have to explain how you feel or anything else to the person who greets you.

Q. I have heard that the south Texas brush-poppers were the best of the old-time ropers. Just how good were they? D.L., Cheneyville, Ill.

A. Reverend Bruce Roberts of Uvalde, Texas, once told of the steer roping at the San Antonio Exposition, in 1902 or 1903. Two teams competed, the Prairie Team and the Pear Eaters, the latter being Texas brush-poppers. The Pear Eaters won, tying nine rough longhorn steers in 9 minutes, 54 & 4/5 seconds. The Prairie team made it in 9.49 & 3/5. Lou Blackaller, of the Pear Eaters, made best individual time, tying three steers in 2.29 & 3/5 seconds. Well, that's how good they were!

Q. What is a jacal? E.E.L., Minneapolis, Minn.

A. Small— sometimes grass-covered— houses of the southwest border country and Mexico.

Q. Why is there such a diversity o opinion about John King Fisher of Texa fame? Some paint him all-bad, other all-good. K.F., Shreveport, La.

A. Probably two factors contribute most to this: Hero Worship and Mis understanding. Few western "bad men were *understood,* as we apply that ter in modern psychology and psychiatry. T enemies they were "all bad;" to friend they all became "heroes." Actually, man of them were mean, kind, lovable, de picable, cruel, strong, weak and all othe attributes we commonly find in huma nature. King Fisher was, no doub like that.

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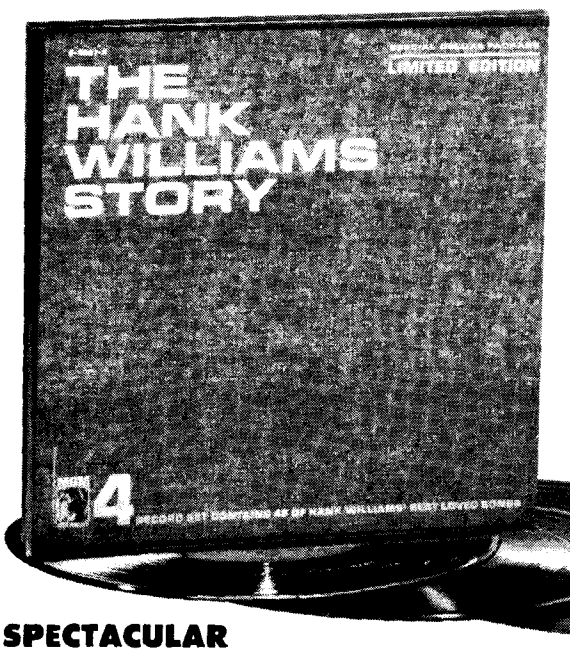

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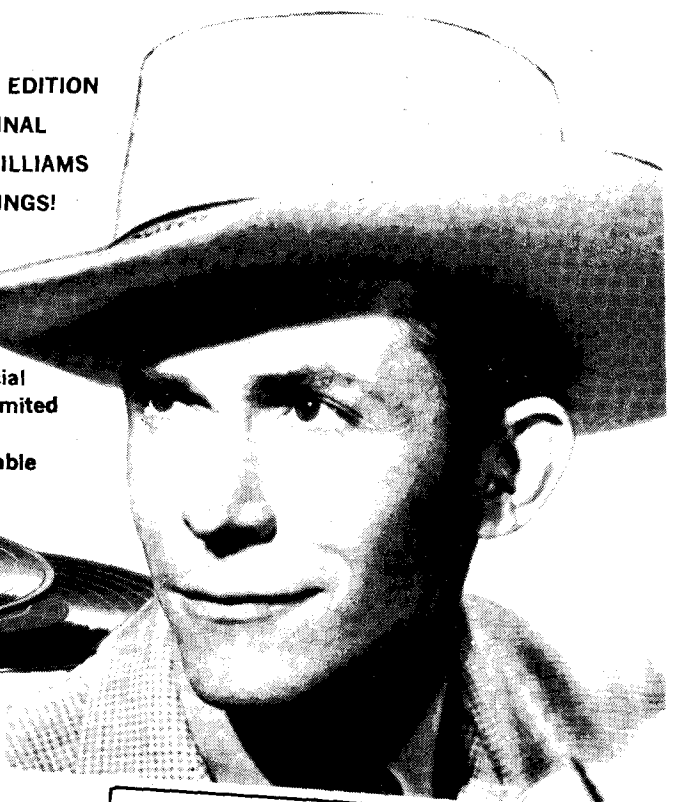

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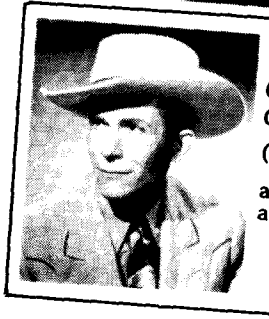

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Hank Williams died in 1953; he was only 30 years old. He had not even reached the peak of his career, yet he was recognized as "the king of country and western music." His death was a tragedy. It meant that America had lost one of its greatest artists, for Hank Williams had brought joy and pleasure to millions . . . had truly interpreted "country and western music" so greatly that his influence is evident in many country and western artists popular today.

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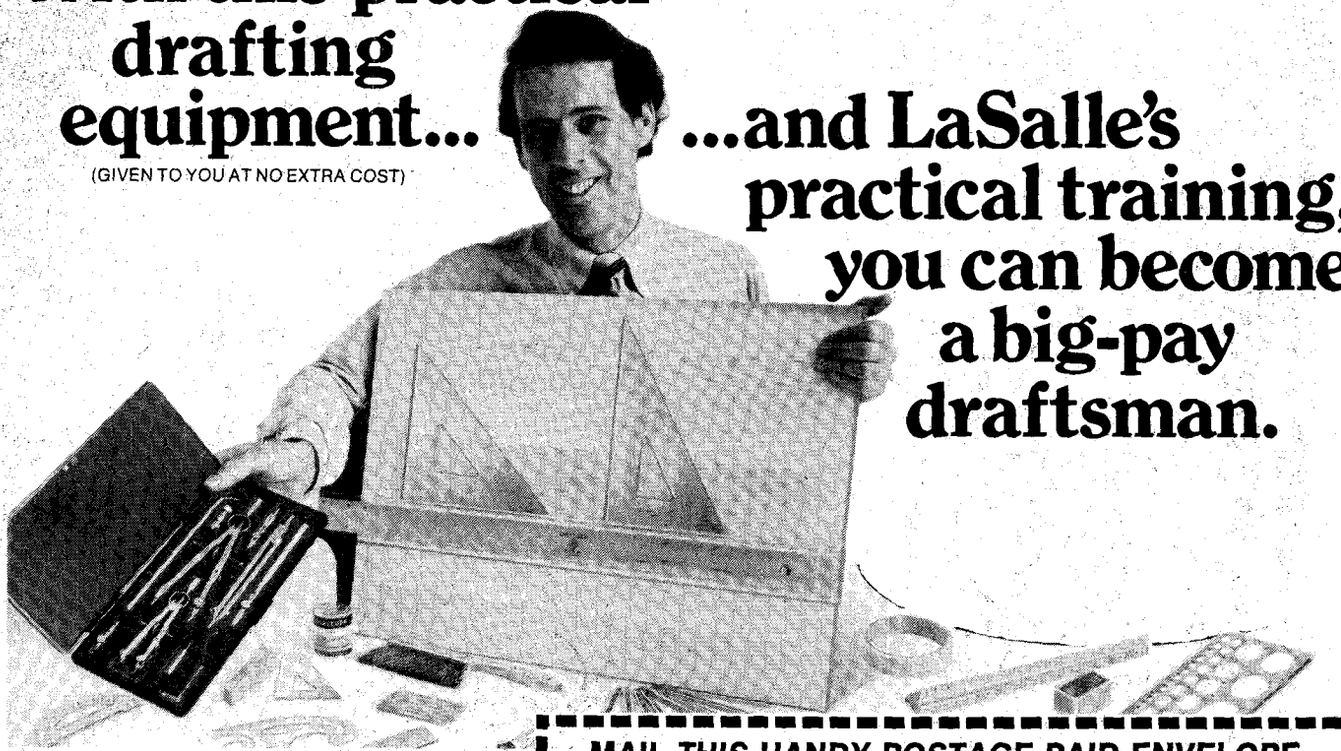

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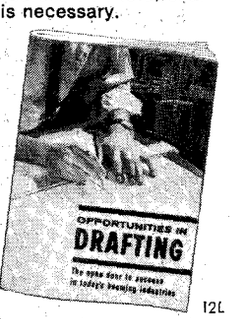

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